

PACHAD DAVID

Mitzavim



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There is an important principle that every person who sincerely desires to repent must know and instill in his heart. Chazal (*Rosh Hashanah* 18a) explain the verse (*Yeshaye* 55:6), "Seek Hashem when He can be found; call upon Him when He is near," as referring to the Ten Days of Repentance. During this time of repentance Hashem is close to us. Chazal tell us that the fate of the average person is not sealed immediately on Rosh Hashanah. This is in contrast to the righteous who are written and sealed immediately for life, and the wicked whose fate is immediately sealed for death. Therefore, during the Ten Days of Repentance the fate of these average people is suspended; if they repent their verdict can be sealed on Yom Kippur for a good new year.

The Rishon LeTzion, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zy"ta (*Maor Yisrael*, *Derushim* p. 48), highlights the following difficulty: If those average people perform mitzvot during the Ten Days of Repentance, thereby adding to their merits, they are now considered tzaddikim, for their merits outweigh their liabilities. So why do they also have to repent? Just by observing more mitzvot they will already be saved.

He answers by quoting an explanation from the Chiddushei Harim zy"ta on the verse (*Bereishit* 18:21), "I will descend and see: If they act in accordance with its outcry which has come to Me – then destruction! And if not, I will know." When Hashem draws near to mankind, there is added holiness in the land, and then automatically mankind too draws closer to Hashem and is awakened to repent. But if they do not repent even after experiencing this closeness, then they deserve to be destroyed.

We can apply this rule to the aforementioned situation. A person may rely on the mitzvot he performs and think that by doing so he already becomes a tzaddik. However, the fact that he does not utilize the closeness and grab hold of the opportunity to regret his sins and repent is such a tremendous claim against him, it tips the scales heavily and outweighs all his many mitzvot.

maskil Le'David The Root of the Year Lies in Its First Day



Therefore, during the Ten Days of Repentance it is not enough for a person to increase his merits, he must also repent wholeheartedly. This is what will merit him with being sealed in the Book of Life.

Every person should be aware that repentance is not just intended for simple people – the righteous too must also repent.

The Torah does not differentiate between the great and wise, and the simple and ordinary. In addition, Shlomo

Hamelech writes (*Kohelet* 7:20), "For there is no man so wholly righteous on earth that he [always] does good and never sins." Chazal expound (*Sanhedrin* 46b), "From here we learn that even the righteous require atonement."

We can add that the power of repentance and prayer of Rosh Hashanah is not limited to Rosh Hashanah alone, but this enormous power influences the entire year. For when a person repents and is immediately inscribed for a good year, the intention is clear that his fate is sealed for an entire year of goodness and peace.

Once, at the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah, my talmidim asked me how I felt on Rosh Hashanah and what my feelings were. I answered that for me Rosh Hashanah is not over until next year's Yom Kippur. I explained that when we wish each other "Shana Tova – A Good New Year," we are emphasizing that every single day of the year has a connection to Rosh Hashanah, for all the wishes we bless each other for the New Year are for the entire year.

Therefore, the root of every day of the year lies in the first day of the year – Rosh Hashanah. This means that all the requests, prayers and repentance of this day do not end on Rosh Hashanah, but continue further. Their power affects every day of the year. This is what a person should ask for – that he may have a Shana Tova, a good year, for the entire year.

If a person truly wishes to follow the upright path, Heaven will help him, as Chazal say (*Makot* 10b), "A person is led on the path he wishes to take." All his wishes and prayers will take root on Rosh Hashanah and have an effect on the rest of the year.

28 Elul 5782

24 September 2022

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Hilula

28 Elul – Rabbi Yitzchak Akarish,
author of *Kiryat Arba*

28 Elul – Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Auerbach,
Rosh Yeshiva Shar Hashamayim

29 Elul – Rabbi Shlomo Amralyo

29 Elul – Rabbi Menashe Klein,
author of *Mishneh Halachot*

1 Tishrei – Rabbi Meir Leibush,
the Malbim

1 Tishrei – Rabbi Amnon of Magnatsa,
author of *Unetaneh Tokef*

2 Tishrei – Rabbi Salman Eliyahu,
author of *Kerem Shlomo*

2 Tishrei – Rabbi Shimon Horowitz,
author of *Kol Mevasser*

3 Tishrei – Rabbi Ephraim HaKohen

3 Tishrei – Rabbi Yisrael Lifschitz,
author of *Tiferet Yisrael (Mishnayot)*

4 Tishrei – Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Borla,
author of *Mekor Yisrael*

4 Tishrei – Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi,
author of *Kos Hayeshu'ot*

5 Tishrei – Rabbi Baruch Shalom Ashlag

5 Tishrei – Rabbi Naftali Katz of Lublin





WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Only Place Unaffected by the Storm in Tiveria

A natural disaster, no less. This is how Tiveria was described after a strong east wind combined with the ocean's high-water level; this resulted in enormous damage along the city's coast line in just a few short hours. The huge waves caused by the strong wind crashed on the boardwalk and on the stretch of the west coast of the Kinneret. Floors were lifted up, potholes opened, chairs and tables flew and glass windows shattered. The damage caused by the storm hit the Kinneret beaches and many trees fell on roads in the surrounding areas. The initial estimate was damage totaling tens of millions of shekels.

In the magazine *Vavei Ha'amudim* issued by the Beit David Kollel in Cholon, headed by Maran Hagaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, it was stated that the floods did not have pity on luxury restaurants, heavy and expensive paving stones, or luxurious beach furniture. The waves broke and destroyed everything in their path.

The following is an account from an eyewitness, who related the events that took place in the middle of Iyar this year: "At night we felt a strong wind blowing from the east. I personally went down to the coast and together with others, tried to save everything possible. Within 30-40 minutes the wind developed into dimensions that cannot even be described; only those who were there can understand. We saw huge waves breaking from a height of four and five meters. No one could really prepare for this; it's two very extreme factors – both the strong wind and the high-water level, which has remained high for several years.

"And yet, there was only one place, very close to the shore, that was not damaged at all.

"It was a hall used as a restaurant, located parallel to the gravesite of Rabbi Meir Baal Haness. It remained completely intact, without any damage! Besides two canopies in the yard that fell – they just fell – nothing else was damaged. Even the chairs next to the beach remained in their place, while everything around this restaurant was completely destroyed. What was the secret of this restaurant? Why did it remain intact? It seems impossible to remain indifferent upon hearing the answer.

"Until just a few years ago, the place was used as an immensely immodest site where the most severe sins were committed. However, the hall changed hands and was bought by Mr. Gabai, who undertook to observe Shabbat and close the site completely on the day of rest. He also committed to maintain the purity of the site, and declared it would no longer be used as a place for depravity. He was indeed meticulous about holiness and Shabbat. And Hashem watched over him, ensuring he suffer no losses on account of the storm!

"Nothing more than miraculous!"



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David
Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

A Sterling Investment

I once attended a *hachnasat Sefer Torah* in France which touched me deeply, as it was conducted amidst much majesty and grandeur. Throughout all Jewish communities, new Sifrei Torah are often brought into the *beit haknesset*. Men, women, and children accompany this new Sefer Torah to its home, amidst music and dancing. Often, torches are lit in honor of the event.

This celebration, too, took place with great honor and glory, befitting a holy Sefer Torah, the delight of our lives. The Torah Scroll was encased in a pure silver casing. It was very impressive, as was the hall where the *seudat mitzvah* later took place.

I was truly joyous at seeing such love and respect accorded to the Torah. I praised the one who had donated so much money to this project. He caused a tremendous *kiddush Hashem* and publicly fulfilled the verse "I prefer the Torah of Your mouth above thousands in gold and silver" (*Tehillim* 119:72).

He demonstrated that just as he invested vast sums in material matters, so, too, and even more so, did he invest in spiritual pursuits. He spared no money in providing the best for the sake of increasing the glory of Hashem.



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Great is Repentance for it Reaches the Throne of Glory

In Parshat Nitzavim we find the well-known verse (*Devarim* 30:2), “And you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, and listen to His voice.” Chazal expound (*Yoma* 86a): “Great is repentance for it reaches the Throne of Glory, as it says (*Hoshea* 14b), ‘Return, Israel, unto Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity.’” The above verse, then, can also be explained in this way: “And you will return unto Hashem, your G-d,” meaning repentance literally reaches Hashem’s Throne.

The *Yabiya Omer* magazine (Shabbat Teshuva 5780) brings a striking question asked by Maran the Rishon LeTzion, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zy”a (in his sefer *Ma’or Yisrael, Derushim* p. 37): If the verse explicitly states “... unto Hashem, your G-d,” unto Hashem Himself, why do Chazal say that repentance reaches only reaches unto the Throne of Glory and not until Hashem Himself?

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef explains by quoting Chazal’s statement (*Bereishit Rabba* 47:6) that the three Avot – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov – are engraved on the Throne of Glory. Each of them is one leg of the chariot, and David Hamelech is the fourth leg. However – and this is surely the case – because David Hamelech took Batsheva as a wife (*Shabbat* 56a), he was no longer fitting to be the fourth leg in the Throne of Glory (the chariot). But after his wholehearted repentance, he once again merited being the fourth leg, together with our holy forefathers.

This could be why Chazal say “Great is repentance for it reaches the Throne of Glory.” That is, we learn from David Hamelech about the greatness and virtue of true repentance, for with this power a person merits reaching the Throne of Glory, meaning his image is once again engraved in Hashem’s Throne.

What a powerful and fundamental lesson! When a person repents, he returns to the root of his soul – the Throne of Glory, and is influenced by its light. He is now embraced by the wings of Hashem.

When contemplating his situation, man must be careful not to despair. Rather he should continue his toil, since the Yetzer Hara continuously tries to discourage a person and make him stumble, ensuring he remains in his wicked state. He tries to bring us to a position of “Nitzavim”, of stagnation, and uphold our negative ways instead of drawing closer to Hashem. However, the correct attitude is “Vayelech” – keep going forward in our avodat Hashem. We must always stand (*nitzav*) in repentance before Hashem and go (Vayelech) from strength to strength.

A DAY OF DELIGHT

The Friday Night Kiddush



1. One should fill the cup with wine until it almost spills over; with this he merits unbounded inheritance.
2. It is a good and proper custom to add three drops of water to the wine prior to reciting kiddush. (According to *sod* wine alludes to strict judgement and water to mercy. By adding water to the wine one sweetens the judgement.)
3. The cup of wine should be placed in the person’s two hands by someone else, who also should use both hands to give it to him. When reciting kiddush he should hold the cup in his right hand without the help of his left hand, and raise it a *tefach* (8 cm) above the table, so it is visible to all participants, who should look at the wine during kiddush. However, if he is fatigued or elderly and fears the cup will fall, he may rest it on the table.
4. Before reciting the blessing over the wine (*hagafen*), he should say “*Savri Maranan*”, and those listening should respond “*Lechaim*.” This helps them pay attention and fulfill their obligation of kiddush. The Gemara says (*Shabbat* 67b), “There was an incident with Rabbi Akiva who made a feast for his son. For every cup he offered the sages, he said: ‘Life and wine to the mouths of the sages and their students!’” (Just as we wish “*Lechaim*” (to life) when drinking wine.)
5. Those who are fulfilling their kiddush obligation through someone’s recitation, should not answer “Baruch Hu u’baruch Shemo” after hearing the Name of Hashem, for this is considered an interruption. One who mistakenly answers however, does not need to recite kiddush again.
6. A person may recite kiddush for someone else who does not know how to do so, and then recite kiddush once again for his own family. (A woman may also do this for her friend.) Concerning drinking the wine, there are two options: A. He should drink a *revi’it* of wine (considered as fulfilling “making kiddush in the place one will eat”), and then he has fulfilled the obligation of kiddush and may recite kiddush again for his family. B. He should not drink from the wine at all; rather the listener should drink most of a *revi’it* (41 grams), and then the one who recited kiddush has not fulfilled his obligation of kiddush.
7. After reciting the blessing, the one making kiddush should drink most of the wine in the cup (*melo lugmov* – the amount he can hold in one cheek, i.e. 41 gram). If it is difficult for him to drink this amount, he should taste a small amount and then one of the listeners should drink *melo lugmov*. Beware, several people each drinking a small sip which together amounts to 41 grams is not considered as *melo lugmov* (*Shabbat* 56b). However, if they do so kiddush should not be recited again, for in a place of doubt one is lenient.
8. It is considered an enhancement of the mitzvah to distribute a small amount of the wine to each listener. This shows endearment of the mitzvah. It is also a *segulah* for healing eyesight.

For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.



TIMELY TOPIC

Is There an Easy Way to Lighten the Sentence?

One of the most precious gifts given to us by the Creator is the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, known as the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* – the Ten Days of Repentance. During this time a person can reverse his sentence and change his situation from one extreme to the other. Sometimes a person is given a harsh sentence, yet his advocates plead for his life in the Heavenly Court and try to lighten the decree.

Is there really an easy way to lighten the verdict?

Surprisingly, the answer is: positively! Yes! One can change the decree from bad to good! Chazal have long ago revealed to us some good advice that has the power to transform worlds and change the way things are supposed to occur. According to Chazal, it is clear that the sweetest and least harmful form of suffering is – insults! And if a person would realize what the insult saves him, he would dance for joy.

The Mekubal Rabbi Moshe Cordoviro zy”a writes about this in his sefer *Tomer Devorah*: “What are the best torments in the world,

which will not disturb my avodat Hashem? There is nothing more beloved than those who disgrace, insult and blasphemed a person, for they do not deprive him of his strength or cause him to suffer sickness, nor do they deprive him of his food and clothing, or end his or children’s life with death. If so, he should desire [these kinds of torment], and say; ‘I would rather suffer scorn and embarrassment by others.’ And when he is insulted he should rejoice with this.”

One of the most unpleasant situations, that can cause strong, outrageous feelings, is when a person is wrongly suspected.

An honest person knows he is innocent of any crime; the plot fabricated about him infuriates and aggravates him and takes away all his tranquility! If the person can prove his innocence – he should do so. But even if it is impossible to prove, as believing Jews we know: humans see with their eyes whereas Hashem knows the true situation.

Practically speaking, we must value, appreciate and be aware – those suspected in vain are being afforded a golden opportunity to be saved from all kinds of harsh and bad decrees, G-d forbid, and even to be blessed with a Heavenly gift! And who knows if this opportunity will return?!

The Chafetz Chaim zt”l used to travel around from town to town selling his sefarim for a small amount of money, less than their true worth, to bring merit to the public. He was willing to sell them on credit, so people could begin to study the sefarim right away. He would record the debts in a special notebook, and the next time he visited that town he would collect the debts.

In the town of Drohitchin lived a Jew named

Rabbi Mordechai Lieb HaKohen. He bought sefarim from the Chafetz Chaim and paid immediately in cash. Yet the next time the Chafetz Chaim came to that town, his messengers came to Rabbi Mordechai and informed him he had a registered debt for buying sefarim. Rabbi Mordechai claimed this was impossible; he had never owed anyone even a single kopeck! But they showed him the debt recorded in the notebook, black on white – Mordechai HaKohen from the town of Drohitchin owed Maran the Chafetz Chaim such and such kopecks for the sefarim he bought on a certain date.

Even though Rabbi Mordechai was sure he was right, he did not reason anymore and paid the ‘debt’. A short time later the mistake became clear: there were two Jews in Drohitchin named Mordechai HaKohen! However, the second Mordechai was not called Lieb, and it was this fellow who owed money for the sefarim!

The Chafetz Chaim personally hastened to go to Rabbi Mordechai Leib HaKohen and ask his forgiveness. But it turned out that this Rabbi Mordechai had sterling middot and never held any grudge at all. The Chafetz Chaim greatly admired his noble behavior and gave him a blessing: “May you live long and good years!”

Indeed, Rabbi Mordechai Lieb HaKohen merited immigrating to Eretz Yisrael and lived to the ripe old age of ninety-six.

Rabbi Mordechai Leib would recount this wondrous story to his offspring, explaining that when someone suspects a friend and it turns out to be a false suspicion, it is an auspicious time to pray, and it is worthwhile utilizing the opportunity to bless the ‘suspect’.

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