

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Teshuvah is Within Our Reach

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
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As we approach Rosh Hashanah, and continue to focus on Teshuva during the month of Elul, the process often seems daunting. Changing habits that have become second nature, and resisting temptation seems out of reach. Teshuva appears to many as a mountain that is too high to climb. However when one reads through a few of the Meiri's comments on different Gemaras in Shas, it is clear that Teshuva is very much within our reach.

The Meiri (Bava Kamma 92a) says, "A person should always admit to his sin and abandon it, and he should not be so brazen as to deny his sin. He should remember the saying of the wise one, who says 'Denying a sin is two sins.' He should learn as well from the ways of the Avos; we find by Yehuda that he admitted, and said, 'She is greater than me,' and was not embarrassed."

The Meiri's advice to learn from Yehuda, specifically emphasizing that he was not embarrassed, indicates that the primary hindrance to admission, and the cause of brazen denial is embarrassment. This idea makes Teshuvah extremely relatable, and an achievable reality. If a person realizes the only thing stopping him from doing Teshuva is embarrassment, he can work to overcome that, as Teshuvah has now gone from a daunting process to a simple formula of overcoming the embarrassment.

We find another comment by the Meiri (Sanhedrin 43b) that says the following, "A person should always humble his inclination, and focus on his sins, and he should be confident that his Teshuva will be accepted with this. This is derived from the Korbanos which were intended to humble the heart and

cause confession for sins."

It seems from this Meiri that one is able to be confident that his Teshuvah will be accepted even without fulfilling all the steps of Teshuva, which are; regret, confession, abandoning the sin, and commitment to never do it in the future. All he mentions as necessary is the humbling of the Yetzer, and focusing on his sin. Meaning all that is needed is a constant push to overcome the Yetzer Harah, and a focus on what I am doing wrong. If he does this he can be confident his Teshuva will be accepted. Once again this thought makes Teshuvah within striking distance.

Another point we see from the Meiri is that it is a necessary step to be confident that your Teshuva will work. It seems that in order for a person to put in effort to do Teshuva, he has to know it will succeed, otherwise he won't be able to put in the effort.

There is another Meiri that says the following, "A person should not give up hope from Teshuvah due to a lack of motivators. However, even when he is in a state of bliss his heart should constantly be turned towards returning to Hashem - analyzing his actions, which ones are making Hashem angry and which ones are wanted, and this is the highest level of Teshuvah. Regarding this it says, 'He reaches until His honorable throne.'"

Once again we see even though the whole process of Teshuvah seems to be missing, the Teshuvah works. Not only that, it is considered the greatest Teshuvah if a person's whole focus is to get close to Hashem, and he therefore focuses on his actions - which ones are leading to that goal. Based on all the above Meiri's we clearly see that Teshuva is within our grasp.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me - *my Beloved has become to me as one who has a bundle of myrrh in his bosom, and he said to him, "Here, take this bundle, which will give a more fragrant scent than the first one that you lost." So was the Holy One, blessed be He, appeased by Israel for the incident of the Calf and found them an atonement for their iniquity and said: Donate to the Tabernacle, and let the gold of the Tabernacle atone for the gold of the Calf.* (Shir HaShirim 1:12,13 with Rashi)

But why does Hashem grant us even more after atoning for the sin of the golden calf than He would have given us had we not sinned at all? Perhaps we can grasp this concept with the following analogy: In the realm of perfect love, a couple had an incomparable bond, and their love for each other was unparalleled. However, a heated argument once erupted between them, though they quickly reconciled. The scars of that conflict lingered, and the husband realized that mere assurances of their relationship's strength would not fully comfort his wife, who was saddened by the blemish on their otherwise perfect marriage. After much contemplation, the husband found words that would bring her complete solace: "Our relationship won't return to its previous state, but through our reconciliation and the lessons we've learned, it will be even stronger than if we had never argued in the first place!"

In a similar vein, Hashem, our Beloved, seeks to provide complete comfort to Klal Yisroel. Thus, He tells us, "Not only has your sin not weakened our relationship, but it has led to an even greater level of closeness." This concept applies to Teshuvah from any sin, as Chazal state: "One who does Teshuvah out of love, their sins are transformed into merits" (Yoma 86b).



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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"Please remember to stop by Hallmark for that pen I asked you about," my daughter requested as I hastily left the house. However, as the hours passed and I went about my day, her words gradually faded from my memory. It was only when the acquaintance I had offered a ride to requested, "Can you please drop me off by Hallmark?" that her request suddenly resurfaced in my mind.

I couldn't help but reflect on the profound lesson hidden within this seemingly simple incident. Amidst the vast cosmos, with the weight of the entire universe resting on His divine shoulders, I marveled at how Hashem concerns Himself with such seemingly trivial matters as my little daughter's pen. I shared this insight with my acquaintance, remarking, "Isn't it beautiful how Hashem, despite overseeing the grandeur of creation, pays attention to the minutiae of our lives?"

My acquaintance responded with a knowing smile, "For Hashem, your little daughter's pen is no insignificant matter."

As we approach the Yom Hadin when our destinies and those of our loved ones hang in the balance for the coming year, it is essential to remember that to our Heavenly Father, we are not mere statistics or faceless entities awaiting judgment. Rather, Hashem is deeply engrossed in our individual, precarious situations, much like a concerned parent would be if their only child's life were on the line.

However, it is vital to recognize that we have the power to return to the loving embrace of our Creator. In doing so, we acknowledge that our Creator's concern for us, no matter how insignificant our concerns may seem, is boundless, and His love is ever-present as we navigate the choices that shape our lives.