



# מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

שאינן אנו עוין פנים וקשי עורף לומר לפניך ה' אלקינו צדיקים אנהנו ולא האמנו אבל אנהנו ואבותינו האמנו ... (נוסח וירחי לקשי"ת)  
How does one become a real *Baal Teshuva*? What is true repentance? *Chazal* tell us there are numerous ways to repent, but usually in each instance, it requires an awakening in a person's soul, which allows him to see the folly of his ways and thereby repent. The question is: how does one achieve that "awakening"? There are a number of ways ....

Before **R' Avraham Brody ז"ל** became a renowned *Rosh Yeshiva* in the city of Prague, he was a *melamed*. One day, he came to learn with his young charge, and he was informed that his services were no longer needed. He was fired.

Asking no questions, R' Avraham left. But the man who had fired him felt no peace. He had one son and he wished him to become a great *Talmid Chacham*. Someone of greater renown had offered to learn with his son and so he switched *melamdim*. For many years afterward, as his son grew and became a scholar, the man felt terrible. He cried bitter tears.

He decided that his son should go to Prague and enroll in R' Avraham's *yeshiva*. The *bochur* was accepted and he turned into a blossoming scholar. He would ask pointed questions and all who learned with him beheld a great future in store. R' Avraham, too, took notice of this unusual prodigy and asked him what his name was and from which town he had come. The boy refused to answer, saying his father had given him strict orders not to reveal his identity to anyone.

R' Avraham asked again and again, and finally, the boy relented. When R' Avraham heard who his father was and that this boy was once his pupil, he said, "Do you know why your father merited to have such a special son as you? It is because he did a real *Teshuvah* with a broken heart because of what he did, and *Hashem* does not reject a broken heart!"

Another story. In the city of Guadalajara, Spain, there lived a man who sinned without shame. He flaunted his wickedness; no sin was too big or too small for him and he reveled in his "Rasha" status. The great Spanish *Chacham* and Kabbalist, **Rabbeinu Moshe De-Leon ז"ל** (he is credited with putting the *Zohar* in writing) lived in Guadalajara and on one occasion, this wicked man jokingly asked him if there is any remedy for his sins. He was told that the only atonement is to accept upon himself the judgment of death as an expiation for his sins. He would be put to death in a terrible manner and only with that will he ultimately receive a portion in *Gan Eden*. The sinner laughed. Further in jest, he told the *Chacham* that he would agree only if R' Moshe swore that he should have a seat in *Gan Eden* in his vicinity. And so, R' Moshe swore to him.

Suddenly, strong hands grabbed the man and blindfolded him. He was ordered to confess his sins publicly and accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven completely, in addition to accepting upon himself death in exchange for his sins.

Now, the sinner became scared. This was no joke anymore and he began crying out loud, begging for mercy. A pronouncement was made that hot molten lead was to be poured down his throat, burning his insides and killing him horribly, and now, his wails and cries were deafening. Realizing that this was it, he began to sincerely repent his sins.

The gathering of elderly *Talmidei Chachamim* ordered him to open his mouth and prepare for the molten lead. Crying and begging for mercy, the man opened his mouth in compliance. Then, a full spoonful of honey was thrown into his mouth and the *posuk*, "וִיִּסֶר עוֹנֶךָ וְחִטְאֶתְךָ תִּכְפֹּר" - "*Your iniquity is removed and your sin eliminated,*" was recited.

The *Baal Teshuva* was in shock. What just happened? It took a few moments to realize but when he did, he screamed bitterly. "Rabbeinu Moshe, why did you deceive me? Was this all a trick just to make me repent? Well, I repented. Kill me now so I won't see my destruction. Why should I desire to live after all the sins that I've done?"

R' Moshe told him not to fear for *Hashem* has already accepted his actions. From that time onward, the penitent did not stop learning *Torah* and for the remainder of his life, he did *Teshuva*. When his *Rebbi*, R' Moshe De-Leon, eventually died, the *Baal Teshuva* cried bitterly that his *Rebbi* was taken and he *davened* that he should follow suit since he now had no *Rebbi* to guide him. A few days later, he fell ill. When his death was imminent he began to scream, "I am coming to fulfill my *Rebbi's* oath." After he died, many elders saw through a dream how this *Baal Teshuva* was sitting next to his *Rebbi* in *Gan Eden* learning *Torah* with him. (This incredible account is recorded in **Sefer Ta'amei Haminhagim**.)

## תורת הצבי על הפטרות

שובה ישראל עד ה' אלקיך כי בשלת בעונך ... (הושע ב-ד)

In the *Haftorah* for *Shabbos Shuva*, *Hoshea HaNavi* beseeches *Klal Yisroel* to recognize the gravity of their sins and work extra hard to secure *Hashem's* forgiveness through *Teshuva* and *Tefillah*. When describing the nation's sins, though, the *Navi* chose the double wording of "כי כשלת בעונך" - "*for you have stumbled in your iniquity*" as opposed to wording like "כי עוית" which is a singular more grammatically correct version of the same idea. Why did he do that?

The **Netziv**, **R' Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin ז"ל** explains that *Chazal* teach that *Teshuva* should be left to "hang" – which means that one should "leave a few days" from his

busy schedule for the express purpose of doing *Teshuva*. Says the *Netziv*, the ten days between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* aren't there arbitrarily, rather, every one of those days serves a special purpose for each Jew and it is our duty to utilize this time properly. It is imperative to remember that what stands in the way of bettering one's self is his own iniquities and only he alone can atone and repent for them.

Thus, even though it is grammatically correct to use a singular form, the double wording of "כי כשלת בעונך" is not only a reference to the "few days" of *Aseres Yimei Teshuva* which are indispensable for one to properly prepare himself for *Yom Kippur*, but it is also a reference to the proper way to do *Teshuva* altogether. May we all merit a *Gmar Chasima Tovah*.

# מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZTL

Children, by nature, have a tendency to mimic the actions of their parents. A parent's choice will impact the future actions of their progeny. At times, a parent may make a poor choice, but rationalizes that it's just this one time, so it's not the end of the world. However, the child sees a parent's action, but is not privy to this rationalization. Says the **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל**: "בנינו מומם" - a father does something bad for himself - it's a לא, a no-no. But for the child, it's a state of "בנינו מומם", an everlasting "מום". And for the next generation, "דור עקש ופתלתל" it's a דור that's lost forever! We unfortunately witnessed this concept with the rise of the Conservative movement here which morphed into Reform, and led to intermarriage, at the cost of losing thousands of our brothers and sisters, *r"l*. What caused this? Loosening of some halachic restrictions most likely led to it. Be it the decorum in *shul*, or the slight pushing of the *tznius* "envelope." Nobody ever fathomed the catastrophic results. But by lessening the adherence to our *mesorah* even to a small degree, the long term impact turned out to be absolutely devastating.

My *machshava* is that when a son sees his father occasionally skip *minyan*, he may do the same. If the father continuously arrives to *shacharis* in time for *Ashrei*, the son will inevitably show up for *Borchu*. If a mother's skirt barely covers her knees, can we expect her daughters to be better? The examples are endless. On *Shabbos Shuva*, we can change our lifestyle to better ensure the *hatzlacha* of future generations. Let us paint a better picture for our children. Let's come before *davening* begins. Where to go *Chol HaMoed* should be decided based on *minyan* availability. A child who sees that after a long hard day at work, his father rushes to *shul* for a *shiur*, or sees her mother take out a *Tehillim*, will internalize what's important in life. The same goes for the *tznius* issue. As the *Yom Hakadosh* approaches, let's *b'ezras Hashem* make the appropriate *kabalos* uplifting our lives and ultimately our children's lives and be *zoche* to a *gmar chasima tova*, with *nachas*, *simcha*, *parnasa*, *v'kol tuv!*

## משל למזח הדבר דומה

לו חכמו ישכילו זאת יבינו לאחריתם ... (לב-בב)

**משל**: A merchant once came to a wholesaler and put together an order of \$100,000. When it was time to pay he explained that he did not have the money, but would like to purchase all of this on credit. Based upon the wholesaler's experience with this merchant in the past, the wholesaler wholly rejected the request. However, after much prodding and pleading, he was ready to give in. His salesman and workers stopped him explaining to him that it would cost him untold aggravation, time and money. The wholesaler was in a quandary; should he listen to the merchant with the poor credit record, but who was in dire need of making a living, or to his loyal workers?

At that moment, an old and respected man walked in and the wholesaler immediately asked him what to do. The wise

man turned to the merchant in need of a livelihood and asked him if he had at least \$5,000 in cash. The response was affirmative. He advised the merchant not to buy anything on credit, but instead to buy \$5,000 worth of goods. When he sold those and made money he could come back and buy \$7,500 in goods. No credit would be necessary. The merchant would buy for cash and the wholesaler and his loyal employees would be happy. (*Mashal* from the **Chofetz Chaim ז"ל**)  
**נמשל**: We ask *Hashem* for credit, saying we will do better in the future, but the *Malachim*, the Heavenly angels, vehemently argue against us, pointing to our past record of inequity. Our *Rabbanim*, the wise men, however, tell us to do *Teshuva* in areas and ways where we can accomplish, in "cash" - little by little, building up our repentance on our own, so that everyone is pleased and everyone is happy!

## EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF - תשובה -

## דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

תעבר על פשע לעם שבי פשע תמהה פשעינו ... (נוסח י"ב)

Let's imagine that we all signed up for Weight Watchers this year. We decided, once and for all we are going to lose those extra pounds. So, we quickly learn the routine. Every Thursday morning, we get weighed. The instructor writes down our weight and we try to stick to our diet throughout the week. What usually happens, though, is that we are not so careful on Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday we want to start to get serious, but Tuesday night there is always a wedding or *Bar Mitzvah* that pops up. On Wednesday morning, we realize that if we don't do something drastic, we will have big *bizyonos*. So on Wednesday we fast. We don't eat a thing. Of course, at night we break our fast and try to be careful but on Thursday morning we get on that BIG SCALE. We close our eyes and pray. When we open them up, we are not too happy. Not only didn't we lose, we gained a pound. "I don't understand," we say, "I didn't eat a thing all day yesterday. How can this be?" What about the day before that? What about the whole week? You can't fast for one day before you get weighed and expect a positive outcome...

My friends, that is true when it comes to a physical body on a physical scale. But when we talk about a spiritual *neshama* on a spiritual scale IT DOES WORK! *Hashem* gives us these few special days of *Aseres Yimei Teshuva* to fix up the whole year. Even if a person did *aveiros* - they can easily be wiped away. They can become null and void as if they never were. All we have to do is *Teshuva*. *Teshuva* is not far away from us, the *Torah* tells us. "כי קרוב אלק הדבר מאד בפיך ובלבבך לעשתו".

You have to say *viduy* with your mouth and put your heart into it. Follow 4 steps. "ויודי - קבלה על העוונת" - and then get on that scale. See who you really are. Yes, you can do it! Don't get so busy that you don't have time for the main purpose of *Aseres Yimei Teshuva* - JUST DO TESHUVA! May we all be *zoche* to a *gut gebenched* and *gezunter yur*. Enjoy the new and improved YOU as you stand proudly on the scale this *Yom Kippur*. And don't worry so much about that other scale in your house .... enjoy your honey cake and may it truly be a sweet year for all of *Klal Yisroel*.