

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על דשא

AL E I DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

Our Love for Mitzvos

יְדִיד נָפֶשׁ אֵב הָרַחֲמָן. מְשׁוֹךְ עֶבֶדְךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ.

My soul's Beloved, merciful Father / Draw Your servant to Your will.

We ask Hashem that we should love doing His mitzvos and not view them as a burden.

On Rosh Hashanah we blow *shofar* before *Mussaf* and again during *Mussaf*. The

a Yid's heart longs for the Ribono Shel Olam. Even when he is not acting properly, it is only his yetzer hara which has taken hold of him

Yerushalayim' would hold their four *minim* throughout the day because they were eager for *mitzvos*. Why does the Gemara need to say that we blow *shofar* twice to confuse the *satan*? Just as the men of Yerushalayim took their *lulav* many times a day because they cherished the *mitzvos*, that should be sufficient reason to blow *shofar* twice, as well.

The *Sfas Emes* explains¹ that in the case of the men of Yerushalayim, it was only a custom, and it was only done by a few select individuals who loved *mitzvos*. But in the case of *shofar*, we blow twice by Chazal's decree, and it is required of not only special people but even simpletons. Chazal instituted that everyone should demonstrate love of the mitzvah to silence the *satan*.

How is it possible to institutionalize endearment? Once it becomes an obligation, it is simply the way the mitzvah is done, and no longer demonstrates love!

אַרְשֶׁת שְׁפָתֵינוּ יַעֲרֹב לִפְנֵיךָ אֵל רִם וְנִשְׂאָ.
—מִבֵּין וּמֵאֲזִין מִבֵּיט וּמִקְשִׁיב לְקוֹל תְּקִיעָתוֹ
May the utterance of our lips be pleasing to You, Almighty, Most High and Exalted / Who understands and gives ear, Who perceives and listens to the sound of our shofar blast.
What is the deep understanding of *shofar*

Renewing Ourselves Through Teshuvah

יֵשִׁיב לֹא נֹאמַר כִּי אִם וְשָׁב וְקִבֵּץ.

It does not say, "and He will bring back," but rather, "and He will return and gather." (Zemiro of Shabbos, based on Megillah 29a).

Rav Avraham of Slonim, the Beis Avraham, explained that there are some *aveiros* which cannot be amended with *teshuvah*. These are *aveiros* of which it may be said לא נֹאמַר—*to do teshuvah, it is not said*. What is one to do if he has done such *aveiros*? כִּי אִם וְשָׁב—*nevertheless, he should do teshuvah*. Even though he cannot achieve *teshuvah* for his *aveirah*, he should do *teshuvah* anyway.³

When the person sinned, he did not look in the *sefarim* to see if what he was doing was correct. When he does *teshuvah*, as well, he should not check in the *sefarim* to see if his *teshuvah* will help.⁴

שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעוֹנֶיךָ—*Return Yisrael until Hashem your G-d, because you have stumbled in your sins* (Hoshea 14:2, *Haftarah Shabbos Shuvah*). The Gemara (*Yoma* 86a) learns from here the greatness of *teshuvah*. Our *teshuvah* has the ability to reach all the way to the *Kisei HaKavod*—*ad Hashem Elokecha*.

³ See *Nesivos Shalom Shemos* p. 39.

⁴ Someone came to the Ruzhiner, bitter because he was guilty of many *aveiros* and he wished to do *teshuvah*. The Ruzhiner told him that if one wants to do *teshuvah*, there is nothing preventing him. But the man complained that he could not do *teshuvah* because he didn't know how. The Ruzhiner responded, "But did you know how to sin? Did you have a *sefer* which taught you how to sin? The same way you sinned time and again, so too, leave the sins and do *teshuvah*."

Our Love for Mitzvos

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that these lines speak of? The Rambam writes² that a Yid's heart longs for the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Even when he is not acting properly, it is only his *yetzer hara* which has taken hold of him. Every Yid loves the *mitzvos*, but his *yetzer hara* makes it hard for him to connect with

his innermost feelings. On Rosh Hashanah, Chazal instituted that we all demonstrate our love for *mitzvos*. Hashem knows that our true, innermost desire is to be close to Him. When Hashem probes our actions on Rosh Hashanah, we ask Him to look deeply into our

tekios and see through our human façade. It is this deep, innermost love of *mitzvos* which silences the *satan*.

(סעודה שלישית שבת תשובה מאמר ב)

2 Hilchos Geirushin 2:20.

Yom Kippur

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to awaken us Yidden to keep the mitzvah of the particular *parshah* being read.¹⁴ The one exception is the *parshah* of *arayos*. Since people have a strong desire for *arayos* (*Makkos* 23b), reading the *parshah* does not quell the desire. However, this is not the case on Yom Kippur. After we have fasted a whole day, and we are somewhat removed from our earthly nature, that is a time that we can read the *parshah* of *arayos* and it can enter our hearts.

In *Maftir Yonah* we read: תְּשַׁמְּרוּם הַבְּלִי נָשׂוּא—*Those who cling to empty folly, forsake their own chessed* (2:9). *Chessed* is an allusion to *arayos*.¹⁵ *Empty folly* refers to all of the *yetzer hara's* wares that he tries to sell: they are all empty. Now, at the end of Yom Kippur, we are awakened to distance ourselves from the *yetzer hara*. We have the opportunity to make a true *kabbalah*, from the depths of our hearts, to work on purifying ourselves. This is the key to all kinds of *yeshuos*.

The pasuk tells us: וְלֹא יִרְאֶה בְּךָ עֲוֹנוֹת דְּבַר וְשֵׁב—*Let Him not find anything unseemly among you, and turn away from you* (*Devarim* 23:15). When we are entangled with *arayos*, Hashem distances Himself from us. But we can infer the opposite, as well: When we take upon ourselves to distance ourselves from *arayos*,

and we are careful with *kedushah*, Hashem can be found among us.

May Hashem *bentch* us all with a *gemar chasimah tova*.

(קודם נעילה, יום כיפור תשפ"ד)

Motzaei Yom Kippur

There is a mitzvah to begin building the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur. Practically speaking, it is difficult to build a sukkah when we are weak from the fast, and we push off building the sukkah to the following day. Nevertheless, we should 'drive in one peg' on Motza'ei Yom Kippur.¹⁶

When Avraham Avinu was setting out on his journey to *Akeidas Yitzchak*, the pasuk (*Bereishis* 22:3) relates that Avraham chopped wood to bring along for the journey. Avraham could have found wood closer to his destination; why was it necessary to chop wood before leaving?

Rav Shmuel Eliyahu of Zvolin explained that the *yetzer hara* constantly works on distracting us from *mitzvos*. Even after we decide to do a mitzvah and we set out on our way, the *yetzer hara* tries to divert our attention. Avraham was afraid that the *yetzer hara* would prevent him from doing the mitzvah at some point before he reached his destination. He made sure to chop

the wood first thing in the morning. Once he took some real action required for the mitzvah, he had already latched on to the mitzvah, and the *yetzer hara* would not be able to pull him away so easily.

On Motza'ei Yom Kippur, we must immediately perform some part of a mitzvah, before the *yetzer hara* gets the better of us. We drive a starting peg into the sukkah to accomplish this.

It is not only into the sukkah that we must drive a peg. As soon as Yom Kippur ends, we must drive a foundational peg into our hearts as well. We must awaken ourselves to Torah and *mitzvos* and not make excuses. The *yetzer hara* will have us hear that in our times we are too weak to learn Torah and do *mitzvos* properly, but we must not listen. The *hisorerus* of Motza'ei Yom Kippur, if we peg it down, will take us through the whole year.

This is why the Baal Shem Tov would call the day after Yom Kippur “ג-ט”ס נאמען,”¹⁷ and this is why we wake up early on the day after Yom Kippur.¹⁸ We start off the year with the *zerizus* of Avraham Avinu, and begin doing *mitzvos* immediately.

(מוצאי יום כיפור תשפ"ד מאמר ג)

14 See *Ibra D'dasha Ki Seitzei* 5783 #1.

15 See *Vayikra* 20:17.

16 See *Rema O.C.* 624, 625; *Aliyos Eliyahu* p. 52 #48 quoting the Gra.

17 *Eshel Avraham* 624.

18 2 *Mishnah Berurah* 624:14.

Renewing Ourselves Through Teshuvah

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The *Sfas Emes* points out that there is a similar pasuk in *Parshas Nitzavim*: וְשָׁבַת עַד—*And you will return until Hashem your G-d* (Devarim 30:2). Why does the Gemara infer the quality of *teshuvah* from a pasuk in *Nevi'im* when it can prove this same point from a pasuk in *Torah*?

The Ramban writes⁵ that the *pesukim* in

The Ribono Shel Olam is still here. We can do teshuvah, we must do teshuvah, and in shamayim they are waiting for our teshuvah.

Nitzavim are foretelling what will happen to Klal Yisrael at a later date. In the future, we will sin, and at that point, we will do *teshuvah* that can reach the *Kisei HaKavod*. This idea is easily accepted by one who has not sinned, as it is only theoretical. But once someone has sinned, the *yetzer hara* makes them feel completely hopeless. They begin to feel as if they have lost any connection with the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Such a person will feel that he can no longer achieve a *teshuvah* that is powerful enough to reach the *Kisei HaKavod*. The Gemara quotes the pasuk in Hoshea which speaks to after Klal Yisrael sinned. We see clearly that even at that point,

our *teshuvah* can reach Hashem. The *ki* at the end of the pasuk (כִּי כְשֶׁלַת בְּעוֹנְךָ) is translated as “although.” *Although you have stumbled, you can do teshuvah that reaches until Hashem.*⁶

אִם יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךְ בְּקֶצֶה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ—*If your strayed ones are at the ends of the heavens, from there Hashem your G-d will gather you, and from there He will take you* (Devarim 30:4). Whatever our level, and wherever we may be, Hashem will gather us from there and we will do *teshuvah*!

ה' א-ל רחום—*Hashem Hashem, Mighty and Merciful* (Shemos 34:6, the 13 Attributes of Mercy). The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 17b) explains the first two *middos* of Hashem, Hashem: Hashem has mercy before we sin, and He continues to have mercy after we sin. Why do we need a separate *middah* of *rachmanus* before we did anything wrong?⁷

The promise from before we sinned will not comfort us after we have already sinned. Hashem promises that when we sin, He will have mercy—this is the first “Hashem.” But one who has already sinned cannot imagine it possible for Hashem to accept his *teshuvah*—he needs a second promise of “Hashem.” The *Ribono Shel Olam* is still here. We can do *teshuvah*, we must do *teshuvah*, and in *shamayim* they are waiting for our *teshuvah*.

הַלּוֹמֵד יָלַד לְמָה הוּא דּוֹמֶה, לְדִין כְּתוּבָה עַל נֶיֶר חֲדָשׁ. וְהַלּוֹמֵד זָקֵן לְמָה הוּא דּוֹמֶה, לְדִין כְּתוּבָה עַל נֶיֶר מְחֻק—*One who learns as a youth, to what is he compared? To ink written on new paper. And one who learns when he is elderly,*

to what is he compared? To ink written on a rubbed paper (*Avos* 4:20). The Mishnah means not only remembering what we learn, but also the impression the Torah makes on us—the eternal life that Hashem plants within us.⁸ When we are young, we are still clean from sin, and fit to accept Torah, *yirah*, and all that is good. But once we have become old and full of sin, we are not able to absorb the Torah as well.

The *Sfas Emes*⁹ writes that as long as we live, we are considered as one who is “learning as a youth.” Each day we are young when compared to the day that will follow. Simply put, the *Sfas Emes* means that although we may be old and unable to absorb the Torah properly, we should still not waste our time, because at that particular moment we are younger than we will be in the future.

The *Imrei Emes*¹⁰ takes it further: The Chiddushei HaRim would say that even someone who is older can be considered “learning as a youth,” if he learns in a youthful manner. This applies to the new and erased papers of *aveiros* as well. Even if we have grown old and piled on many sins, we can still act youthful by renewing ourselves and doing *teshuvah*. The Rambam writes¹¹ that one who does *teshuvah* is renewed and becomes like a new person. Our sins are not part of us. As long as we live, we can renew ourselves; we can awaken the *kedushah* within us and do *teshuvah*.

(סעודה שלישית שבת תשובה תשפ"ה מאמר א')

⁵ Devarim 30:1.

⁶ The *mefarshim* explain a pasuk in Tehillim 25:11 in a similar fashion: su evigrof mehsaH taht tseuqer t'nod eW .taerg si ti (כִּי) hguohtla ,nis ym evigrof llahs uoY— וְסִלַּחְתָּ לְעוֹנֵי כִּי רַב .meht evigrof esaelp ,snis taerg evah ew hguohtla “hguohtla” sa denialpxe si ik ,rehtar ;snis taerg evah ew esuaceb

⁷ *Rosh, Rosh Hashanah* Chap. 1 #5 and *Tosefos HaRosh*.

⁸ See Aleh Deshe Rosh Hashanah 5786: Free to Serve Hashem.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Vayechi* 5667.

¹¹ *Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:4, 7:6.



Parshas Vayeilech	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbos
Brooklyn	6:28	7:34
Lakewood	6:29	7:35
Baltimore	6:38	7:35
Chicago	6:20	7:20
North Miami	6:54	7:46
Los Angeles	6:25	7:20

Yom Kippur

Erev Yom Kippur

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 119a) says that וְיִקְרָא ה'—[to call] Hashem's holy day honored (Yeshayah 58:13)—refers to Yom Kippur. There is no eating or drinking on Yom Kippur, so we must honor the day with fresh clothing. Rashi writes as well that when the pasuk calls Yom Kippur וְיִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ—a holy occasion (*Vayikra* 23:27), it means that we must sanctify Yom Kippur with fresh clothing and davening.

The *Sfas Emes* writes¹² that the body is the clothing of the *neshamah*. It is not enough for us to wear clean clothing on Yom Kippur; we must ensure that our bodies, the clothing of our *neshamos*, are clean. We must wash our

The yetzer hara always looks to ensnare us, and even at such an exalted time, we must beware of falling into sin.

bodies well and purify ourselves.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 18a) teaches that on Erev Yom Kippur, they would pass bulls, rams, and sheep in front of the *kohen gadol* so he would be familiar with the various animals that would be sacrificed the following day. The only animal not brought were goats. Since they were brought to atone for sins, seeing them would give the *kohen gadol* a sudden feeling of despair (*chalishus hadaas*). But the bulls are also brought to atone; why should bulls be passed before him? The Gemara explains

that the goats were brought for the sins of Klal Yisrael. The *kohen gadol* does not know who has sinned, and the idea that Klal Yisrael has sins will bring to *chalishus hadaas*. The bulls were brought to atone for the sins of the *kohen gadol* and his family. If anyone in the family was guilty of sin, the *kohen gadol* would know about it, and would be proactive in having them do *teshuvah*. He would not have *chalishus hadaas*.¹³

The Gemara means to coax us to *teshuvah*. Yom Kippur will soon be upon us; search your deeds well. Clean your heart from all its sins and stains, and enter Yom Kippur properly. If we assume the *kohen gadol* knows the *aveiros* of his family and therefore can bring them to *teshuvah*—certainly we know our personal sins, and can bring ourselves to *teshuvah*.

(ערב יום כיפור תשפ"ד)

Ne'ilah

During *Minchah* of Yom Kippur we read the *parshah* of *arayos*. It is curious that we read such a topic on Yom Kippur, when the *yetzer hara* is not at his normal power; yet the *sefarim* write that it is actually for this reason that we read about *arayos*. At a time when we are on a high level of *kedushah* and we are weakened from our long fast, we may think that, on such a level, the *yetzer hara* is powerless, but this is not the case. The *yetzer hara* always looks to ensnare us, and even at such an exalted time, we must beware of falling into sin. Not only do we have to watch from regular sins, but we must be cautious even from terrible sins such as *arayos*.

This can be explained in the opposite way as well. Reading the Torah contains a *segulah*

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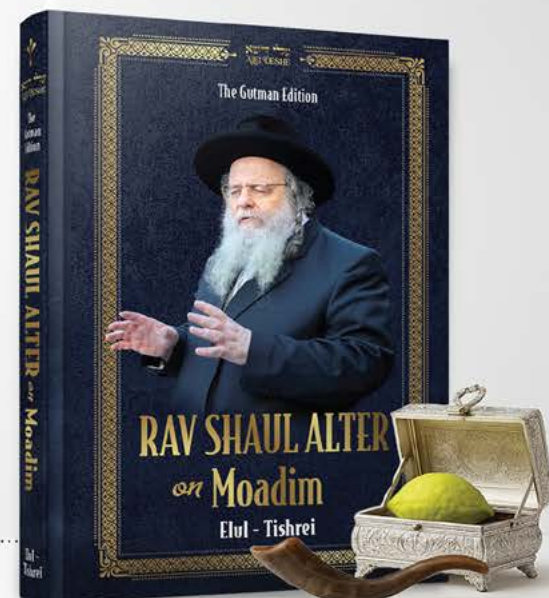
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12 *Yisro* 5638 s.v. *zachor*; *Likutim b'Zohar Hakadosh* s.v. *kabed*.

13 The Gemara adds a common saying: "If your nephew becomes a tax-collector, don't pass by in the street." Family members know what is going on in the family. If you have money hidden away, your nephew surely knows of it; if he becomes a tax-collector, stay far away.