

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



על דש

ALAI DESHE

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

To Be a Remnant

In *Maseches Rosh Hashanah* (17b) Rava said: *כל המעביר על מדותיו, מעבירין על פשעיו*—*Anyone who forgoes his reckonings [of the injustices done to him] will have his sins passed over.* He learns this from a pasuk: *שָׁנָאֵם: "נושא עון ועובר על פשע". למי נושא עון*—*For it says "Who pardons transgressions and overlooks sin"* (Michah 7:18)—*to whom does He pardon transgressions? For one who passes over*

The way to overlook grievances with humility is to take a hard look at one's own faults.

sins which were committed against him.

This is a valuable strategy to be *zocheh b'din*. A person should relinquish complaints that he has against people who hurt him. By doing so He will merit that Hashem will forgive his sins.

However, there is something important to keep in mind. The Gemara relates that Rabi Acha bar Chanina said: *אליה — וקוץ — בנה*—*This is a fat tail with a thorn in it.* What is the caveat? The end of the pasuk says: *לשארית נחלתו* — *for the remnants*

of His inheritance. This teaches us that the promise of forgiveness applies only *for the remnants of His inheritance*, not for all of His inheritance. It applies only for someone who conducts himself like a remnant, that is, to a person who behaves with humility.

A person carries a grievance against another. He decides that he is going to overlook the hurt that the person caused him. He now feels that he is such a noble person: he has every right to hate this other individual and bear a grudge against him, but because of his great nobility of character, he is overlooking all of these just complaints. This is not humility.

The way to overlook grievances with humility is to take a hard look at one's own faults.

The Mishnah (*Negaim* 2:5) says: *כל הנגעים אדם רואה חוץ מנגעי עצמו*. Literally this means that a Kohen may examine any *nega tzara'as* other than his own. The Baal Shem Tov interpreted this as follows: All of the faults that a person sees *חוץ*, outside himself, are *מנגעי עצמו*—originating from the person's own faults.

Whenever we notice other people's faults, it is a sign that to some degree we are afflicted with this fault. Perhaps only in a very small measure. But if this

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Exchanging Our Aveiros

והיתה זאת לכם לחקת עולם לכפר על בני ישראל מכל חטאתם אחת בשנה ויעש כאשר צוה ד' את משה.

This shall be to you an eternal decree to bring atonement on Bnei Yisrael for all their sins once a year; And he did as Hashem commanded Moshe (Vayikra 16:34).

We *lein* the *avodah* of Yom Kippur in *Parshas Acharei Mos*. After recounting all the details of the *avodah*, the Torah concludes that Aharon did as Hashem commanded.

The Rebbe of Lublin¹ asks: Why does the Torah state the obvious and tell us that Aharon Hakohen did as he was commanded? Also, why is it attached, as the end of the pasuk, and without mentioning the name of Aharon? It could have been a separate pasuk, such as: *ויעש אהרן כאשר צוה ד' את משה.*

He explains that the pasuk alludes to a fundamental teaching about the atonement of Yom Kippur. The day of Yom Kippur has the power to transform a person's sins into mitzvos by inspiring him to teshuvah out of love, *teshuvah me'ahavah*. Such teshuvah not only rescues us from punishment but transforms our *aveiros* into mitzvos.

We can read the pasuk as follows: *This shall ... atone on Bnei Yisrael — for all their sins — and he did as Hashem commanded.* That is to say, the sins of Bnei Yisrael will transform into acts which Hashem commanded, acts that are mitzvos,.

1 Zichron Zos, Parshas Achrei Mos.

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To Be a Remnant

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fault came to one's attention, then he himself is not entirely unblemished of it. So too, whenever a person hears criticism, he should pay attention. He should understand that there is an element of truth to it. If he heard this criticism than he was meant to hear it. He should accept the humiliation and use it to improve himself.

This is what Dovid Hamelech did when Shimi ben Geirah cursed him. Instead of getting angry he said: *Hashem has told him to curse* (Shmuel II 16:10). This response

reveals more than self-control; it reveals a recognition that if he heard this criticism, then he was meant from Heaven to hear it, because it contained an element of truth and there is something he should improve. The metaphor Chazal use—a *fat piece of meat with a thorn in it*—conveys that the promise of forgiveness for forgiving others is a tempting opportunity, but inside this opportunity lies a danger. Forgiving others can lead to arrogance. It can bring a person to feel superior. He is right, his friend is completely wrong,

and yet he forgave him. We need to grab this opportunity while avoiding that arrogance.

This is what is expected of us in the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. If people embarrassed you or criticized you, forgive them. But don't just forgive them with an air of superiority. Have the humility to recognize that you were meant to hear what they said because it contains something for you to work on in order to improve yourself.

ליל שבת תשובה תש"פ מאמר ג

The Erev Yom Kippur Pounding

Every morning we say the baraisa of *Pitum Haketores*. The baraisa states that there were three measures of *ketores* from which the Kohen Gadol would take the *ketores* of Yom Kippur. On Erev Yom Kippur these three measures would be returned to the mortar; ושוחקן יפה יפה כדי שתהא דקה ושוחקן יפה יפה—*and he would pound them very thoroughly so that it would be the finest of the fine*.

This alludes to the teaching of Shlomo Hamelech: *אם תכתוש את האויל במכתש בתוך לא תסור מעליו אולתו הריפות בעלי, לא תסור מעליו אולתו*—*Even if you pound the fool in a mortar with a pestle along with the grain, his foolishness will not leave him* (Mishlei 27:22). Grain is pounded with a pestle in order to break it down, remove impurities, and transform it into something usable. We can try to break down a fool in an attempt to separate the

foolishness from him and improve him, but generally it will not help.

Erev Yom Kippur, however, is a time to try again; to return our foolishness to the mortar and pound at it again. On this day, with the approach of the holy day of Yom Kippur, a person can succeed in breaking free from foolishness, turning his focus to what's valuable in life, and thereby improving himself.

עיו"כ תשפ"ה

The Comfortable Fish

וימן ד' דג גדול לבלע את יונה ... ויתפלל יונה אל ד' אלקיו ממעי הדגה.

Hashem prepared a large fish to swallow Yonah ... And Yonah davened to Hashem his G-d from the belly of the fish (Yonah 2:1-2).

Rashi explains, citing Chazal, that at first Yonah was swallowed by a large male fish (דג גרול) where he was not cramped and did not feel the need to daven. Then Hashem had this fish spit him out into the mouth of a female fish (דיגה) whose belly was full of baby fish, causing Yonah to be cramped. Only then did Yonah cry out to Hashem *from the belly of the (pregnant) fish*.

This seems amazing to us. Imagine if we were swallowed by a fish; we would panic and immediately cry out to be saved. What

difference would it make if we had room to move around in the belly of the fish?

The difference depends on whether we live with the awareness that we are on a mission. Yonah knew that he was sent on a mission by Hashem. If he now found himself in the belly of a fish, that meant that the fish was taking him where he was meant to go. There was no reason to panic. If it was dark and uncomfortable, that was insignificant. If he was put there, then that was where he belonged, and from there he would be brought to where Hashem wanted him.

Hashem had to shake Yonah up and put him in distress so that he would realize that he was in fact in danger, in a difficult

situation from which he could not escape without crying out to Hashem.

Much of what distances a person from Hashem, and leads him to sin, is a lack of awareness of mission and purpose. We are each on our own mission in life. We may not realize what our mission is, but Hashem guides us towards it.

When we are in distress, we must daven to Hashem. At the same time, we must accept our mission, and realize that our circumstances, whether we like them or not, are designed by Hashem to lead us in the direction of our individual mission in life.

מוציא יו"כ תשפ"ה

Exchanging Our Aveiros

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With this insight we can appreciate the words of the Berditchever's song, *Ribono Shel Olam, ich vil mit dir machen a beit*: "I'd like to make a deal with You. I will give You חטאים עוונות ופשעים, and in exchange You will give me מחילה סליחה, וכפרה." Understandably, we would like forgiveness and pardon, but what does it mean that we offer Hashem our sins? What are we offering Him?

The answer is that if we achieve *teshuvah me'ahavah*, our sins become very valuable; they become mitzvos. What we are offering Hashem is the actions that once were *chata'im*, *avonos*, and *pesha'im*. As we express love of Hashem and a desire to do

teshuvah, these actions transform into acts which are precious to Hashem.

The Chasam Sofer² writes that when a Yid does *teshuvah me'ahavah* every *k'zayis* of *neveilah* that he ever ate is now considered like a *k'zayis* of Korban Pesach.

If we think *teshuvah me'ahavah* is an elevated level which is far beyond our grasp, this is nothing but the persuasion of the *yetzer hara*. The *Sefas Emes* declares that such *teshuvah* is not reserved for great and holy people. All that it takes, he explains, is for a person to reflect on the ceaseless kindness of Hashem.

When a person thinks about the gift of his functioning body and the wonderful

things that he constantly receives in life, he will feel the love of Hashem. Even if a person has problems in life, his cup is not half-full; it is a full cup of goodness that Hashem constantly bestows on him. When a person feels this love, he will want to serve Hashem with love. This is *teshuvah me'ahavah*.

This is what we can attain on Yom Kippur. With sincere reflection, we will be able to make a fair exchange with Hashem. We will give Him all of our *aveiros*, and, in exchange, receive *mechilah*, *selichah*, *v'kaparah*.

יו"כ תשפ"ו מאמר ד

2 Derashah L'Shabbos Teshuvah 5571.

The Fast of the Ninth

Following Maariv on the night of Yom Kippur, we begin the Selichos with a *piyut* that includes the words: יְעֹלָה עֲוֹנוֹנוּ מִעֶרֶב, וְיָבוֹא סְלִיחָתֵנוּ מִבֹּקֶר —*May our affliction ascend from evening, and may our plea for forgiveness arrive from morning.*

At the time that we say this *piyut*, our stomachs are full. It is not long after we ate a satisfying meal. What is the affliction that we are suffering in the evening?

Chazal (*Yoma* 81b) teach: *anyone who eats on the ninth of Tishrei it is as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth.* The *Sefas Emes*

asks on this *gemara*: What does it mean *as if he fasted on the ninth and the tenth*, considering he did fast on the tenth? Isn't it only the ninth that is *as if* he fasted? He answers that eating on the ninth itself is like two fasts, *the ninth and the tenth*. These two fasts are besides the fast of the tenth.

The significance of eating on Erev Yom Kippur is that at this time a person already feels the awe of the approaching Yom Kippur, and is eating to prepare himself for the *avodah* of the coming day.

The purpose of fasting is to enable a Yid to elevate himself above the concerns of Olam Hazeh. Eating as preparation for the holy day of Yom Kippur is eating for holiness, and therefore it elevates him the same way that fasting does.

When we say יְעֹלָה עֲוֹנוֹנוּ מִעֶרֶב, the *inui* we are referring to is not the fast of Yom Kippur, but the elevation we accomplished on Erev Yom Kippur which is equal to a fast.

עיו"כ תשפ"ו

Hashem's Encouragement

Chazal³ said: "They asked Wisdom, what is the punishment of the sinner? She told them, *evil will pursue sinners* (*Mishlei* 13:21). They asked Prophecy, what is the punishment of the sinner? She told them, *the sinning soul is the one which will die* (*Yechezkel* 18:4). They asked the Torah what is the punishment of the sinner? She told them, he shall bring an *asham* and it will be atoned for him.

"They asked *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, what is the punishment of the sinner? He said to them: let him do *teshuvah* and it will be atoned for him."

We must understand this. If in the end they asked *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and He told them the answer, for what reason did Chazal tell us what wisdom, prophecy, and the Torah had to say?

The idea that Chazal were teaching here is that a person should never despair. A person who feels mired in sin will hear many discouraging voices telling him that he can never succeed in escaping the price for his sins. Despite all of those voices, Hashem tells him: "Do *teshuvah*. I will accept it and cleanse you of your sins."

יום ב דר"ה תשפ"ד מאמר ד

3 Yalkut Tehillim 702.

Maintaining Composure

Parshas Hazinu	Shabbos	Motzei	Y"K	Motzei Y"K
Brooklyn	6:49	7:39	6:38	7:36
Lakewood	6:42	7:40	6:39	7:36
Baltimore	6:51	7:49	6:48	7:45
Chicago	6:34	7:35	6:31	7:31
North Miami	7:03	7:55	7:01	7:53
Los Angeles	6:37	7:31	6:34	7:28

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ, לָכוּ וְנִפְּלֵה גּוֹרְלוֹת, וְנִדְּעָה בְּשִׁלְמֵי הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ, וְיִפְּלוּ גּוֹרְלוֹת וְיִפֹּל הַגּוֹרֵל עַל יוֹנָה. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו, הֲגִידָה נָא לָנוּ בְּאֶשֶׁר לָמִי הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ, מִה מְלַאכְתְּךָ, וּמֵאֵין תָּבוֹא, מִה אֶרֶצְךָ, וְאִי מְזָה עִם אֶתֶּה:

Then they said to one another, "Come let us cast lots, that we may determine on whose account this calamity is upon us." So they cast lots and the lot fell on Yonah. They said to him, "Please tell us on whose account has this calamity befallen us? What is your trade? And from where do you come? What is your land? And of what people are you?" (Yonah 1:7-8)

We cannot help but marvel at the composure of the sailors and the people on the ship. They were engulfed in a storm. The ship was about to break apart. When the lot fell on Yonah, we might expect them to grab him and throw overboard. Instead they engaged in a detailed interview with him. They inquire who he is, what he does, where he comes from. Even after Yonah stated clearly that

he was the cause of the calamity, they did not immediately throw him overboard, but tried to row hard to regain the shore. This was an amazing display of good character. Despite their terrifying situation, they did not lose their composure. They remained reluctant to throw someone overboard to save themselves. Before acting, they patiently explored whether this was correct and necessary. Where did such noble character come from?

After Yonah's salvation, he said: מְשֻׁמְרִים — הַבְּלִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר חֲסִדָּם יִעֲזְבוּ — *They who cling to empty folly forsake their abominations* (2:9). Many *mefarshim* explain this to mean that when the sailors and the people on the ship reached Nineveh, they threw away their idols and converted to Judaism. We are told that the *neshamos* of *geirim* were at Har Sinai. Even the character traits of kindness and compassion which the Avos imbued in Klal Yisrael, becomes the inheritance of *geirim*. Although in

practice the people on the ship were not *megayer* until they arrived in Nineveh, they were inspired to discard their idols, and reached their decision to convert while still on the ship, when they saw that their idols were of no help to them and the storm was clearly from Hashem on account of Yonah. This explains the patience and composure which they displayed. The lesson which we must take from this is to always remain composed. Never be in a hurry to harm someone else. Before doing something that may hurt another person, take the time to carefully consider whether or not it is necessary and if it is the right thing to do.

מוֹצָאֵי יו"כ תשפ"ו מאמר א

From the Desk of the Rosh Yeshivah

The challenge you face is not easy. The pasuk says: תוֹחֶלֶת מִמְּשִׁכָּה מַחֲלָה לֵב — *prolonged anticipation makes the heart ill* (Mishlei 13:12). Still, a Yid is called upon to rise above his emotions and strengthen himself in *tefillah* before Hashem, "Who heals all flesh and acts wondrously."

What is needed is not an abundance of *tefillos* and *segulos*, but sincere, heartfelt *tefillah* rooted in the recognition that only Hashem can bring a *yeshuah*, together with complete faith and loving acceptance of all that has happened.

May Hashem grant them a full recovery.
Shaul