

STORY

NEW AT THE JOB

I am not from Lakewood. My business has quite a few employees; male and female, some Jewish and some not. Yankel, who commutes from Lakewood, works in the warehouse.

One bright day, Yankel summoned me, his boss(!), to a Din Torah. Yankel argued that I, as owner of the company, should be obligated to maintain a safe environment for all employees. This should include an employee dress code to eliminate *Shmiras Einayim* problems at the warehouse.

I, on the other hand, argued that Yankel doesn't have to work here. He can leave today and get a job elsewhere or open his own business. I have been telling this to Yankel for weeks already.

We left the Bais Din after presenting our case, to await a ruling within the next few days.

I was seething with anger. Such CHUTZPAH! Who does Yankel think he is? I have frum employees for years and nobody was bothered with the immodesty. Yankel comes along, a new employee, and is making demands! I was determined to send Yankel



back to Lakewood! Where is his Hakaras hatov?

The next morning, at my request, Yankel was sitting opposite me at my desk. I was

all pent up but I was going to do this with constraint, with professionalism. I had Yankel's final pay - twelve hundred dollars - with me and I was fumbling for the right words. My mind was churning with the happenings of the past few weeks since Yankel was hired. The nagging, the guilt trip, the ultimate Din Torah. I looked Yankel in the face and I almost started to cry. "Why was I letting Yankel go? What exactly was his crime?"

I finally found my tongue and told Yankel, "I wanted to personally let you know how very pleased I am with your all around performance". I gave him the twelve hundred dollars as a bonus and told him to keep up his good work.

That was my *Hakaras Hatov* to him, for showing me what *messiras nefesh* for one's values means.

(The psak/ruling is beyond the scope of this newsletter)

SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS

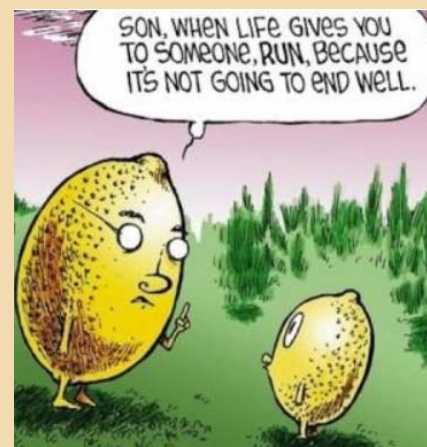
Did you hear about the Yekey who came late for Mincha? He missed Ashrei, but he made it on time for Yoshev.

I may be schizophrenic, but at least I have each other.

"I'm in no condition to drive... wait! I shouldn't listen to myself, I'm drunk!"

"The pen is mightier than the sword, and considerably easier to write with."

"Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, 'Where have I gone wrong?' Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'"



Hashem helps you to do Teshuvah



The pasuk in Tehillim (103) says, כָּרַחַק מִזֶּרֶחַ מִמַּעַרְב הָרַחֵיק מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת פְּשָׁעֵינוּ. "As far as the east is from the west, that is the distance Hashem has removed us from our sins". Rav Nosson Dovid of Shidloltza

explained that the distance of east from west is essentially not much. You stand facing east and then you turn around and you are facing west. So too, with teshuvah, you just turn around to go in a new direction and you are already considered as having a new destiny.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains in Nefesh Hachaim (1:12) that when a person performs a mitzvah, he begins the action and Hashem helps him complete it.

We can posit that the person who is seeking to repent merits special assistance from the Ribbono Shel Olam. When he turns away from sin and shows interest in repenting, he begins the arduous process and Hashem helps. This is why teshuvah is the only mitzvah regarding which Chazal tell us that Hashem says, "Pischu li pesach kepischo shel machat, open a hole the size of the eye of a needle, and I will do the rest." He becomes involved in a Jew's attempt at returning, helping him navigate the difficult path.

Thus, we can understand the meaning of the teaching that "The level of the person who has performed teshuvah, is higher than that of the tzaddik who never sinned". That is because the baal teshuvah merited Hashem's assistance. Hashem has, so to speak, stood beside him and grasped his hand. He has felt the Divine Presence. Hashem has been part of his journey, so his "makom," his place, is elevated.

It follows, therefore, that Elul should be a happy month, for it is the month when we begin walking down that holy path. As we study the sifrei mussar, think about how we are doing, turn inward, engage in introspection, and contemplate our future, Hakadosh Boruch Hu comes to help us. He is here, at our side, waiting to help us back.

Where do we start?





It's Elul and we all want to start doing Teshuvah, but we ask ourselves "Where do we start?". The Chofetz Chaim says that the essence of doing Teshuvah is to make a careful reckoning of what things brought us to sin or made it possible for us to sin, and to avoid those things

from now on. One who does this, is fulfilling the Mitzvah of "doing Teshuvah" properly.

It sounds simple but it is truly profound. It's not enough to want to do Teshuvah. We have been wanting to do Teshuvah for years and yet we kept falling back into it. Even stopping the sins is not enough. We've stopped in the past for periods of time, only to slip again back into it again. If we want to do Teshuvah this year and finally GET IT RIGHT, we have to sit down and explore carefully what brings us to fall. We need to ask ourselves, "what are all the different situations and circumstances that cause us to lose hope and take the plunge?" It's not easy, and it may take much trial and error to really learn all the insidious tricks of the Yetzer Hara and how he gets us to fall. But one who is determined, will always stay aware and learn what to avoid.

The most obvious pitfall in these areas is the internet. If you haven't installed a strong internet filter yet, this is exactly what the Chofetz Chaim means! GuardYourEyes can help you set up a filter at guardyoureyes.com/protection.

FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SHMIRAS EINAYIM, NOW IS HARDER THAN EVER!

Being confined to home without work, feeling anxious and stressed, as well as constantly checking our computers and phones, are breeding grounds for the Yetzer Hara.

Sign-Up to GYE's **Viral Chizuk** during these trying times by email and Whatsapp:

GUARDYOUREYES.COM

The Curse of Sadness

From a talk by Rav Avrohom Schorr



The biggest disturbance for a person to do teshuva is one of two things.... either the past, or the future.

Reb Nachman Breslover says in Likkutei Moharan that the reason why

chazal say that the word עתה (now) is a language of teshuva is because a person can't do teshuva if he thinks about the past or future.

If a person thinks about the past and sees what he did in the past, and the evil inclination reminds him how his nights were spent, his past thoughts and actions, he thinks he can't do teshuva, the mountain seems much too big.

And if a person is only twenty years old, and he has to accept upon himself fifty, sixty, and seventy years of being good, 'how can I take upon myself such a big job?'

So עתה (now) is a language of teshuva: The power of teshuva is only thinking about the present moment!

Don't worry about yesterday, don't worry about tomorrow, NOW do the Master of the Universe's will!

That's the power of teshuva.

"One thing I've asked from Hashem, that I dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life..." -Psalm 27

"All the days of my life" doesn't mean from now until I go away from this world. It means from the day I was born until the day I pass away from this world.

What kind of request is this?! If I didn't sit in the beis medrash for the last twenty years, then how can I request from the Master of the Universe to dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of my life? What does the request of "all the days of my life" really mean?

It says further at the end of Psalm 27, "For there have risen against me false witnesses who breathe violence."

There's an incredible piece from the Chasam Sofer. He says, you'll come up to the Next World, and there'll come witnesses. The Satan will come with witnesses that you went on this and this night and did this and this sin, Heaven forbid. They'll come and testify that you did this sin.

But then the Master of the Universe will come and say that since the Yid did teshuva from love, he never went there, he went to the beis medrash that night! Because teshuva from love transforms sins into veritable merits! All the nights that you went and did something wrong suddenly became a trip to the beis medrash! They became mitzvos!

"For there have risen against me false witnesses"- says the holy Chasam Sofer, they'll say testimony you did a sin - but it's FALSE! Because you did teshuva.

If you do teshuva with truth, then indeed you "dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of your life." Even all the past (sinful) days became "dwelling in the house of Hashem."

There was a Yid called Reb Chaim Dovid "Doctor". He was a big baal-teshuva. If one reads history of the Austrian Empire, approximately 180-200 years ago, there was a big doctor of the army, he wrote prescriptions, they still have his prescriptions.

He became a baal-teshuva. Reb Dovid Lelover brought him close in teshuva. At the end of his days, the holy Tiferes Shlomo (Rabbi Shlomo Rabinovich of Radomsk) went to pay him a sick visit.

The Tiferes Shlomo was standing by his bed, and Reb Chaim Dovid was sighing. The Tiferes Shlomo wanted to comfort him: "Your earlier (pre-teshuva) years have fallen away," thinking the patient was sighing on the days he did sins and wasn't a frum Yid, employing language used by a nazirite to comfort him.

(The patient) gave a jump up in bed and said, "No, I don't give away one sin... because the sins became merits."

When the government says, you can hand in your guns and cash it in, everybody runs. The Master of the Universe is telling us, "Give me your sins and I will give you back mitzvos!" How can we give up such a gift from the Master of the Universe?

PRACTICAL TIP OF THE WEEK

Don't do it alone

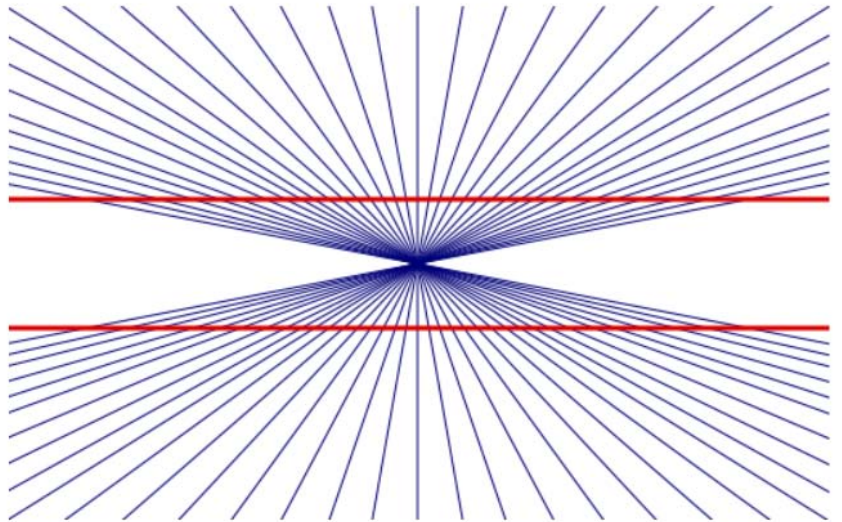


Whenever we work on improving ourselves we naturally speak about it to others, get ideas from them and update them on our progress. Hardly anyone would be successful with a diet if they had to keep it a secret from everyone. However, since shmiras einayim and related issues are something private, we often lack much needed support to stay on target. If you think getting support from someone can help, try GYE's partner program to connect with others in the same boat as you. (It retains full anonymity for both sides, but you are free to open up more to each other as you get more comfortable).

DESIRES ARE AN ILLUSION

Do the two red lines look warped? They're 100% straight!

Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!



INSPIRATIONAL IMAGE OF THE WEEK

