

TESHUVA

Posted by battleworn - 13 Sep 2009 19:59

Today is the first day of selichos (for most of us) so I want to discuss what does Teshuva mean to us. The following is my understanding, based on what I learned from my rabeyim and assorted seforim.

First an introduction:

Basically, we live our life somewhere between the Real World and the Fantasy World.

The real world is the world of truth where our life has a clear purpose and our whole life is centered around that purpose. In the real world there's no frustration, jealousy, self pity or anything negative. As a representative of Hashem, there's no room for arrogance, since our whole essence is our "shlichus" of Hashem. There's also no place for low self esteem. There's no time/room for getting down on yourself because you're ALWAYS busy with your shlichus. One who lives in the real world is always concentrating on what he needs to do right now. He's never concentrating on what he has or doesn't have, on how good or bad he is, etc. He's never lacking fulfillment because he is constantly doing Ratzon Hashem.

The Fantasy World is the world of constant wanting and neediness. Without a clear purpose to life, we are always looking for temporary pleasure, temporary comfort and temporary distraction. This -of course, starts a vicious cycle making us needier and getting us nowhere at best. It's a life of selfishness and self centeredness and a lot of frustration. We are always assessing our self and we feel that we just MUST be good because otherwise we feel like our whole existence is threatened.

To sum up, in the real world the center of our life is Hashem and the whole world consists of nothing but opportunities for doing His will. In the fantasy world, life is centered around myself and the whole world is a confusing mess.

In general, we all find ourselves somewhere between the two extremes. We feel a constant void and/or lack of fulfillment and/or anxiety and/or a feeling of being overwhelmed. It's important to realize that it makes little difference what triggered these feelings. These feelings are normal and do not necessarily make you a candidate for therapy. Some of us have more difficult lives than others, but basically everyone has his "peckel" and the important question is how we deal with it.

There are basically two ways to deal with these feelings. One way is what Chazal call ?????? -that's the easy quick-fix way. This is done by getting drawn farther in to the fantasy world, where we can forget about all our troubles. It provides immediate relief for at least a few seconds. But by moving farther in to the fantasy world and farther away from the real world, we make the problem worse. Hopefully, we then realize that we made a mistake and then it's time for Teshuva which simply means returning to Hashem and the real world. (See below)

The other way to deal with these feelings is what Chazal call ?????? – this is the relatively slow way, but it really works! This is when we realize that the source of all our problems is our disconnection from Hashem as we read yesterday ??? ?? ?? ?? - The simple meaning of this is that all the troubles come from separating myself from Hashem, in other words living in the fantasy world. So we turn to Hashem and start to live in the real world.

This way starts off somewhat bitter because when you've been living in the fantasy world, it's hard to suddenly start facing reality. But Dovid Hamelech tells us ??? ? - once you start living in the real world, you soon see that life is so much better that way. You remove all the problems by their root, because these things don't exist in the real world. And it's a continuous process, your whole life you keep living more and more in the real world and less and less in the fantasy world.

Teshuva Mi'yirah and Teshuva Mi'ahava:

Teshuva mi'yirah is basically when one realizes that the sin that he did is not without consequence and he therefore regrets having done it and wants to erase it. In a sense he is still living in the self centered fantasy world where his focus is still on himself and he's worried about his future.

Teshuva mi'ahava is when a person wants to drop the whole fantasy world and return all the way to Hashem. He realizes that the fantasy world has nothing for him and Hashem has everything for him. His aim is not to erase the sins per-se, rather it's to turn his life around and really return to Hashem. He has come to understand what Hashem told us –as we read yesterday ?????? : He has come to understand that Hashem is the source of all life, all

existence, all happiness and all good. And that pushing Hashem out of your life is the source of all trouble and all problems.

In theory, both paths are acceptable. Some of us might like to choose the teshuva miyirah path because we tend to shy away from upheaval and major change. Furthermore, we might feel like we simply can't. We may think it's only for Tzadikim (like Mevakesh and Ykv Schwartz). We may think that we're just not ready to let go of the fantasy world ("Why can't I just be normal?") Or we may feel that in the present situation it's too extreme and first we have to remove ourselves from all the garbage before we can think about getting close to Hashem. And some may think that Hashem is not interested in them.

But the good news is that Hashem loves us too much to let us continue wasting our life in the fantasy world. He wants the best for us and since He's the Boss we don't have a say in the matter. And so He put us in to a situation where the Teshuva Miyirah approach simply can't work. Here are some reasons why it can't work:

1) The Zohar says (Shemos 214-b) that the only Teshuva that works for p'gam habris is ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ?? ?????? R' Tzadok (Tzidkas Hatzadik #243) explains that this means Teshuva mi'ahava which is a general Teshuva – a complete return to Hashem. Teshuva mi'yirah erases the sins and these sins are not erasable. Teshuva mi'ahava doesn't erase the sins rather its mesaken them and turns them in to merits.

2) An addict (even a relatively mild case) is much too entrenched in his behavior to stop the behavior without a major change in his whole life.

3) In our generation yir'ah doesn't talk to most people very much. Even if it does talk to you, chances are that it can't affect your behavior that much. In fact it can very often have the opposite effect, making you all the more desperate for distraction.

Teshuva mi'ahava, on the other hand, works for all people in all situations. As soon as you start to taste what it means to live your life with Hashem – to live in the real world, you would never dream of going back to being the person that you were before ??? ????? ??????? – that lived a life of never-ending pain.

By the tochacha in parshas Bechukosai –which Chazal say is referring to churban bayis rishon, we don't find anything about Teshuva mi'ahava. Rather the pesukim talk about how the sins will get erased through the suffering. But by the Tochacha in parshas Ki Sovoh -which is referring to this golus, we find nothing about atoning for sins, rather it says:

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This is not about making peace with Hashem, rather it's about ????? ??????? ?? ????? ????????. We finally realize that there is no other way and we turn our whole life around.

The Zohar says:

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Kaviyochol, Hashem is crazy over us and He is waiting for us with open arms. We have nothing to fear, ??' ?????? ?? ????????? was said shortly after the chet ha'egel-the mother of all sins. Hashem wants our hearts ??? ??? ??? ?? and when we give it to Him, life becomes SO SO much better! On Rosh Hashanah we are going to stand in front of Hashem in judgment. Instead of trying to bargain with Him, let's tell Him "Yes Hashem, all I want is You, there is nothing else. Please help me get close to You and give me a year of Kirvas Elokim"

Let's be mikabel to try to have kavanah before each mitzvah (starting with once or twice a day) "Through this mitzvah I want to bring myself and all of Klal Yisroel closer to Hashem" This is especially appropriate when refraining from sin! Every Mitzvah has tremendous power to change us if we want it to.

Wishing all of you and all of Klal Yisroel a k'siva vachasima tova and a terrificly productive and fruitful year.

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 13 Sep 2009 21:06

Thanx! Reb Battle for your words of Great Chizuk!

I was doing well this Elul because of working from Lag Bomer Until today with Teshuva Mei'Ahava.

But after attending Shalosh Seudos last night listening to some Divrei Kevushin (which I think the Rav thought was necessary for those who were still sleeping) very unusual harsh Divrei Torah the Yireh hit me & I was struggling with it the last 12 hours & didn't know how to deal with it.

There is a very thin line between Yirah & Atsvus, if we are not careful we can get it all wrong.

But after reading this post of yours you gave me the Medicine I needed to get back on the Teshuvah M'Ahava Train.

I hope I can do it.

Thanks!

E.L.

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by bardichev - 13 Sep 2009 21:07

HEYYY

E.L.

WHAT DID THE HOLY RABBI SAY??

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by TrYiNg - 14 Sep 2009 09:02

Thank you R' battleworn. It helped clarify things in my mind. May it be a zchus for you .

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Schar vo'onesh

Posted by battleworn - 14 Sep 2009 14:43

Today is the day the world was created (lemaan de'omar bitishrei nivrah) and the Ben Ish Chai says that it's a special day of Teshuva, Simcha and Hischadshus.

I want to discuss a little about schar vo'onesh, because I think a proper understanding is crucial to our success.

The Rambam in his hakdomoh to Perek "Cheilek" (The last perek in Sanhedrin) explains in great length (in chap. 10, it's well worth learning) what the point of schar vo'onesh is. He gives a long moshol to illustrate that you have to speak to each person in his language. To a simple minded childish person who can't understand anything else, you have to speak in terms that he can relate to. So you tell him "If you do this you'll get a reward; if you do that you'll get a punishment".

But one who thinks that that's what it's really about, the Rambam calls him an **???? ?????** **????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? ??????????**. That may sound a bit extreme but I think the Rambam is trying give us a bit of a shake, to wake us up. Do we really think that we can annoy Hashem? Do we really think we can frustrate Him? Do we think we can give Him something or take away something from Him? Do we think we can mess up His plans?

It's basic Emunah that Hashem doesn't need anything and is not affected by anything. The Whole purpose of creation is to "share" His infinite goodness with us. All He wants from us is to do what's good for us. Everything else is just a means to that end.

Notice that although the Torah often uses the above-mentioned type of language [Like **???? ??** ?] (It's important to realize that these pesukim also have a deeper meaning but the simple meaning is intended for the simple people) but when the Torah wants to say what it's really all about it uses very different wording. As it says in parshas Eikev **????? ?? ????? ?? ????? ?????** **???? ?? ??? ?' ??????? ???????**. In your heart you must know the truth, Hashem is on your team - He wants only what's good for you. Maybe the idea of incurring Hashem's wrath can help you fight your y'h (because it's his language) but in your heart you must know the truth.

Lemaaseh in our generation the idea of schar vo'onesh doesn't benefit us that much, so we don't really need to bother with it very much at all. We might as well stick with the Emes : It's all about doing what we NEED to and Hashem loves us to much let us cop out.

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Re: TESHUVA
Posted by yechidah - 14 Sep 2009 17:29

Thank you Battleworn

and that quote from Zohar in your first piece is extremely important

Thank you for quoting it

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by battleworn - 15 Sep 2009 14:50

Thank you, for your encouraging feedback.

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by mevakesh - 15 Sep 2009 22:03

Hi battleworn,

Thank you for this beautiful post and the encouraging and inspiring *divrai Torah*.

I realize that as addicts we tend to engage in the negative *teshuvah m'yira* aspect of the *mitzva*, but neglect the *teshuvah m'ahava* part.

I appreciate the clarity and sensitivity of your post ...

Tizku La'mitzvos and a gut gabenched yur

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 16 Sep 2009 16:50

bardichev sent me this link

www.simpletoremember.com/media/a/teshuva-recreating-the-personality/ that is this idea but quite deep & in length By Reb Akiva Tatz.

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by bardichev - 16 Sep 2009 16:54

SO THATDEBUNKS ALL PRE-CONCIEVED NOTION

ABOUT "HEIMISH -CHASSIDSH-TOONABIEGELISH" TYPES

ME AND MY GABBEH ARE 2 DEEP SOULSEARCHING MEVAKSHIM

MASQUARADING AS FLAKY-BADCHANIM

HEY WE LISTEN TO RABBI TATZ AND HE IS NO FLAKE

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by MosheF - 16 Sep 2009 17:08

Thanks Battle, love the post and have a question that has bothered me for long. I think there is a huge disconnect between mussar and the chizuk movement. Ever heard a mussar shmuss about "shrklech, Elul is coming" ????? ?????, ??? ????? ??? ??? ????? ?????????? ??? ?????, tons of other depressing stuff, they are not meant to depress people but get them to make a cheshbon hanefesh and do teshufa and return to hashem. Problem is for me and for thousands of others, instead of looking at this the right way, I take one look at myself and remember every single other elul, r'h and yom kippur and then the day after and say "hell, I give up", I don't even think this has anything to do with the addiction, even without it I feel the same way. When a guy like me hears a scary mussar schmooze I think "notin to do with me, this is made for people who can actually work on themselves, I've tried millions of times, he's not talkin to me".

Now take a look at the chizuk movement on this forum and elsewhere. I am chashuv and

loved by hashem even the way I am. Hell, I keep shabbos and most other mitzvos and I open a sefer once a while, I should be dancing in the street for that alone, I have no idea what every small step and teffila does to me. I am not doing this because hashem is standing there with a huge fire stick waiting to hit me hard if I misbehave, but hashem really wants the best for me and is true chesed etc. Every mitzvah I do is a billion dollars invested.

Take this one step further, all the aveiros I do, weather addiction related or not. "don't worry about the ??? ??? and concern yourself with ??? ???", take one small thing to work on yourself and don't worry about the rest. Don't even think about how bad your davening and learning is right now.

My point is that what I call the mussar movement, the scary guys are 100% correct, there is no escaping yom hadin etc. but it is not possible for people in today's generation to listen to that and people like me respond way better to the chizuk talk, so what your telling me is basically "you will burn in hell as you are today but in order for you to get any better you have to forget the hell and concentrate on the good part of yourself"

Point is, you can't really tell people who do all sorts of aveiros not to feel guilty and most of it is not their fault, if that was true Moshiach would have been here many years ago.

My guilt is eating up on me and depressing me even more making me feel worthless, It has been said many times that this is the yetzer hora's trick but the y'h is 100% correct, maybe I should not think about it for now but the y'h is correct that I can't get away with anything on yom hadin (just look at the text in your machzor) and is correct that my kabbalah probably won't be kept and he is correct with every other argument he makes.

I realie I don't make much sense and am just rambling to relieve the pre rosh Hashanah pressure so I can say I did something but will post anyway because I typed it already. Love this site.

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Re: TESHUVA
Posted by bardichev - 16 Sep 2009 17:10

Re: TESHUVA

« Reply #9 on: September 16, 2009, 09:54:12 AM » Quote Modify Remove

SO THATDEBUNKS ALL PRE-CONCIEVED NOTION
ABOUT "HEIMISH -CHASSIDSH-TOONABIEGELISH" TYPES

ME AND MY GABBEH ARE 2 DEEP SOULSEARCHING MEVAKSHIM

MASQUARADING AS FLAKY-BADCHANIM

HEY WE LISTEN TO RABBI TATZ AND HE IS NO FLAKE

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 16 Sep 2009 17:21

Reb MosheF,

Whats up with the "Hell"?

I like using it to but I just say What The Gehenom Does the Y"H want from me?

It just sounds better & I think its funny to like RATM's [Deleted Expletive] Thingi

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by battleworn - 16 Sep 2009 19:28

Moshe, I think it would have been a tragedy if you wouldn't have posted that. These are things that must be sorted out. So let's try.

1) The y'h tells you that you could have done much better. But why should you believe him. Do you think that all the guys posting -b'asra kasiha hadein, are to blame for their aveiros. Let's try to be honest here. Do you really honestly think that it's they're fault.

Look at this gemoroh in Berochos:

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It says clearly, that Hashem agreed that Klal Yisroel is not guilty because the nissayon was to big. But if you compare the moshol (and the nimshal) that the Gemoroh brings to our nissyonos, the difference is almost infinite. If that "ben" would ask me "ma yaaseh shelo yecheta" I would tell him to visit group #3 B'asra kadisha hadein and take a look at MosheF's accomplishments. THAT "BEN" WOULD DIE FROM EMBARRASMENT FOR EVEN CONSIDERING HIS SITUATION A NISSOYON!

[For more on this topic see here: http://rehab-my-site.com/guardureyes/forum/index.php?topic=376.0 and listen to the shiur]

2) We don't necessarily know the reason Moshiach didn't come yet, but check out my new thread coming soon be"H for R' Tzadok's pshat.

3) If you do Teshuva Mi'ahava then it all becomes zechuyos. Oh, but it can't be that simple (ad kan divrei hay'h).

Let's put the y'h's twisted logic aside for a minute and use our sechel. We have no problem believing that when the y'h practically forces us to do an aveiroh and we put up a good fight but fall at the end, we are going get fried by Hashem who is the source of all good!

But to believe that by trying to return Hashem in a world flodded with tumah, we will be misaken everything, somehow we find that hard to believe. You tell me is that logical?

Please keep posting any ha'oros or questions that you have.

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Bakashas Michila

Posted by battleworn - 17 Sep 2009 11:56

I want to ask every one of you to please be mochel me for any type of pain or agmas nefesh that I might have caused you. I also want to apologize for any time that I could have helped and didn't, please forgive me!

Hashem should give each and every one of you a year of avodas Hashem B'simcha and hatzlochoh in everything! A year of true Kirvas Hashem, a year of teshuva shleima-teshuva mi'ahavah. A year of inner piece and tranquilty, a year of rising higher and higher. A year of Ge'ulah Shileima both on a personal level and on a national level! A year that we should all merit to turn our whole hearts completely to Hashem!

Bursting with love for every single one of you,

battle

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