

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.

The other way to deal with these feelings is what Chazal call חזרה אל ה' – 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 וְהָיָה כִּי יֵלֶךְ אִישׁ מִן הַבַּיִת לִפְנֵי ה' וְשָׂא נֹסֶם בְּכַף יָדוֹ וְעָלָה עָלָיו הָרָחֵק וְהָיָה כִּי יֵלֶךְ מִן הַבַּיִת לִפְנֵי ה' וְשָׂא נֹסֶם בְּכַף יָדוֹ וְעָלָה עָלָיו הָרָחֵק – 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 חסד חסד חסד חסד חסד - 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 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 it 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.

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The Zohar says:

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"

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 battleworn - 17 Sep 2009 14:01

Anyway enough with the guilt talk and tachlis we need to to teshuva!

THAT'S RIGHT! Enough with the guilt talk and tachlis we need to to teshuva!

We have a job to do. We're busy every second 24/7 bringing our selves and the world to it's tikun. There's absolutely NO TIME for guilt for worry!

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by the.guard - 17 Sep 2009 18:03

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

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by battleworn - 17 Sep 2009 19:48

Rabeinu, it's worth it you know! Just in case you might have once c'v done an aveiroh; if you

forgive me, Hashem will forgive you!

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by the.guard - 17 Sep 2009 20:09

oK, oK, BUT ONLY BECAUSE YOU ARE ROCKING THIS FORUM!! :D

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Re: TESHUVA

Posted by Efshar Letaken - 17 Sep 2009 21:55

Well well well! Hmmmmmm?

Ok! B'Tnai! That you will work on finishing up & making a gem out of The Torah Approach in the near future.

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