



עשרת ימי תשובה תשע"ד

בעניין תשובה מאהבה
Creative Teshuva

רש"י
כי כשלת בעונך - עונך
יחשב כמכשול שהיא
שגגה.
עליהם הוא יחיה - על
כל מה שעשה, ואף על
העבירות.

מסכת יומא דף פו ע"ב
· אמר ריש לקיש: גדולה תשובה, שזדונות נעשות לו כשגגות,
שנאמר (הושע יד, ב) 'שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הַיְּאֻקִּינְךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ.
בְּעוֹנֶיךָ'.
· הא עון מזיד הוא, וקא קרי ליה מכשול.
· אינני? והאמר ריש לקיש: גדולה תשובה שזדונות נעשות לו
כזכויות, שנאמר (יחזקאל לג, יט) 'וּבְשׁוּבֵךָ רָשָׁע מִרְשָׁעוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה
מְשֻׁפָּט וְצַדִּיקָה עֲלֵיהֶם הוּא יִחְיֶה!'
· לא קשיא. כאן - מאהבה, כאן - מיראה.

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ב הלכה ח
היודי שנהגו בו כל ישראל אבל אנחנו חטאנו (כולנו) והוא עיקר היודי. עבירות
שהתודה עליהם ביום הכפורים זה חוזר ומתודה עליהן ביום הכפורים אחר אע"פ שהוא
עומד בתשובתו שנאמר כי פשעי אני אדע וחטאתי נגדי תמיד.

R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל, "Sacred and Profane" (in *Shiurei HaRav*, pp. 26-28)

There is a concept dating from Plato that the basic values of man's personality (taken in a broad sense) are not fully evaluated in his lifetime or while he has them. An example of this concept is health. While one is imbued with the euphoria of health he is not keenly aware of his physical state. He fails to appreciate the treasure of health. It is only when one has first become ill that he first realizes what health means.

In his pessimistic temperament Schopenhauer contended that we understand health through sickness, pleasure through pain, and good through evil. This awareness through contrast is also apparent in the concept of home or fatherland. We have the striking example today in the sentiments of soldiers overseas...

What is it that breeds complacency in man to his vital values while he has them? Because these values form such an integral part of his physical and mental makeup, they become identical with his psyche, and he, therefore, loses the perspective that only an Archimedean point of distance and contrast may give him. Man is most shortsighted when he would view his own psyche. Man walking the circular Earth sees only a plain.

It is in this light that our Sages envisaged the great man's role. His inspiration may flourish only after his death for those with a qualitative appreciation of time and history.

And this concept of contrast carries weight not only in a mundane sense of health and home, and also for certain religious values, but also for the highest value in man's life—awareness of God. God from afar fascinates one more than God in one's immediacy. The modern Jew has first understood the prophet's cry, 'מִרְחוֹק ה' נִרְאָה לִי [Jeremiah 31:2]. It is today that "God appears to me from afar..." Many a time in our history we did not appreciate the nearness of God or His significance as much as we do today, when in many respects we are so distant from Him.

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It is this same concept of contrast, of first becoming aware of the Lord "from afar," that is intrinsicated in *t'shuva*—repentance. The traditional view is that the *t'shuva* idea is penitence. For the Christian theologian, *t'shuva* is a transcendent act dependent upon the grace of God, Who is all-merciful and benevolent. The erasure of man's sins is, from the rational standpoint, incomprehensible. Only the supernatural, miraculous intercession of God on behalf of the sinner may effectuate this cleansing. The task of the sinner is to repent, to mortify himself, to practice castigation, to cry and implore for divine mercy and pity. The convert, according to this concept, is a passive, pitiful creature who begs for and attends divine grace.

The halakhic interpretation of *t'shuva* differentiates between penitence and purification—*kappara* (catharsis) and *tahara*. *Kappara*, penitence and absolution, is similar, in effect, to the universal concept of conversion, in toto. It is not a psychological phenomenon but a theological one, transcendent and nonrational. To alter the past is an act which denies the laws of causality and regulation in men's life.

But the halakhic concept of *t'shuva* contains yet another element: *tahara*, purification. This concept is one that predicates not the removal of sin but its exploitation. The *tahara* idea is, rather, to change the vectorial force of sin, its direction and destination. When the sinner of the first category attempts to forget his sin and beseeches God to erase it, the Jewish repentant strives to "remember" his sin, וְחָטְאתִי נִגְדִי תִּמְדָּד [Psalms 51:5]. He strives to convert his sin into a spiritual springboard for increased inspiration and evaluation. This act is not supernatural but psychological. It conveys one law in mental causality; although a cause is given, the effect need not equal the cause. The effect need not be predetermined. Man himself may determine the vectorial character of the effect and give it direction and destination.

Rabbi Brovender's Shiur is sponsored in memory of Mr. Gerald Moskowitz z"l by his family.

לעי"נ גרשון אלטר בן יהודה וולף ז"ל

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