

English

בסייעתא דשמיא

# Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"o, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



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## The Two Tiers of Forgiveness Acquired By Fasting and Refraining From Work on Yom Kippur

וְהִיְתָה לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׂבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת נַפְשֵׁיכֶם וְכָל מְלֹאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֲזָרָח וְהַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' תַּטְהֲרוּ (טז כט-ל).

*This shall remain for you an eternal decree; in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and you shall not do any work... For on this day He shall provide atonement for you, to cleanse you, from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed.*

The wording in this Passuk seems to be superfluous, simply repeating the same idea in different terminology; יכפר עליכם, לטהר אתכם, - provide atonement... to cleanse you...



The Gemara in Yoma (פו ע"ג) discusses two forms of sin, and each one's respective mode of atonement. אמר ריש לקיש גדולה תשובה שזדונות נעשות לו כשגגות וכו' איני והאמר ריש לקיש גדולה תשובה שזדונות נעשות לו כזכויות וכו' לא קשיא גדולה תשובה שזדונות נעשות לו כזכויות כגון מיראה - Reish Lakish said; "Great is repentance, for it causes the willful transgressions of the repentant to be accounted for as inadvertent errors" [Hashem regards the willful sins as though they were performed in a state of ignorance.

Inadvertent transgressions do not warrant punishment; however they do tarnish the soul and prevent it from enjoying its full measure of reward in the World to Come.]... The Gemara continues and notes a contradiction between the previous words of Reish Lakish and another statement that he made. Can this indeed be so, that repentance causes willful transgressions to be regarded as inadvertent ones, when Reish Lakish himself has said, "Great is repentance for it causes willful transgressions to be accounted for as merits!"? The Gemara goes on to resolve this contradiction. This is not a difficulty. Here, in Reish Lakish's second statement, he is referring to repentance motivated by love, whereas here, in

the first statement, he refers to repentance motivated by fear.



The Torah commands us to observe two Mitzvos on Yom Kippur; fasting and refraining from work. When one fasts on Yom Kippur, he is actually inflicting himself as reparation for the pleasure which he had obtained by means of his sins, so that alongside his repentance, it will hopefully generate forgiveness. Since he is fasting in order to bring about an atonement, this is a repentance done out of fear of retribution for his sins, and is thus only considered a repentance which was motivated by fear. Consequently, this repentance can only initiate an atonement which causes the willful transgressions to be regarded as inadvertent errors. However, when one refrains from working on Yom Kippur, he is essentially trying to channel his entire being and focus unto Hashem, which is something that is definitely only done out of love to Hashem. Accordingly, when one refrains from working on Yom Kippur and focuses solely on Hashem and on repentance, this is considered to be repentance which was motivated by his love to Hashem, and thus initiates an atonement with which willful transgressions are caused to be regarded as merits, and is consequently entirely cleansed of his sins.

After the Torah commands us with the observance of these two Mitzvos and says; 'you shall afflict yourselves and you shall not do any work', the Torah goes ahead and gives reason for these two Mitzvos; 'for on this day He shall provide atonement for you, to cleanse you'. We can understand the

Torah's repetitious accounting of the forgiveness on Yom Kippur to be the particular reasoning behind each of these two Mitzvos. We can thus explain the Passuk as follows.

בחדש השביעי בעשור לחדש תענו את נפשתיכם וכל מלאכה לא תעשו... כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם, לטהר אתכם - In the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves and you shall not do any work... For on this day He shall provide atonement for you, to cleanse you... The Torah initially commands us to fast on Yom Kippur; תענו את נפשתיכם, and then tells us the benefit that we will attain by fasting; כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם - For on this day He shall provide atonement for you.

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Because when one fasts on Yom Kippur and repents, he secures for himself a *כפרה* - an atonement, which although does not entirely cleanse his soul from the sin's blemishes, nevertheless, it does cause his sins to be considered as inadvertent errors. Subsequently, the Torah commands us; *וכל מלאכה לא תעשו* - and you shall not do any work, and tells us what we can benefit from that observance; *to cleanse you*, for refraining from work together with repenting, brings upon the repentant a total טהרה – cleansing, and grants him a full atonement so much that it causes his sins to be considered as merits.

(זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ב)

**Proper Rebuke Is Intended to Bring Out Love between the Admonisher and the Admonished**

**לֹא תִשְׁנֵא אֶת אַחִיךָ בְּלִבְכֶךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עֲלָיו חֲטָא (י"ט י"ז).**

**Rebuke, shall you rebuke your fellow Jew...**

The Gemara in Bava Metziah (לא ע"א) explains the repetitious wording of this Passuk as follows. ואימא הוכח. וזימנא תרי זימנא, א"ל, הוכח אפילו מאה פעמים משמע, תוכיח אין לי חדא זימנא תוכיח תרי זימנא, אלא הרב לתלמיד תלמיד לרב מנין ת"ל הוכח תוכיח מכל מקום. One of the Rabbis asked Rava, "Let us say that the term 'Rebuke' denotes one time, and the latter term 'you shall rebuke' denotes a second time". The Passuk would thus be teaching us that there is no obligation to rebuke a transgressor more than two times. Rava replied to him, "The term 'Rebuke' connotes that one must admonish his fellow Jew even one hundred times, if necessary. As for the additional term of 'shall you rebuke', this teaches us that even a student must rebuke his teacher, albeit in a respectful manner, if it is the teacher that is transgressing".

According to Rava, the Torah commands us not to yield after we rebuke our friend and don't see him change his ways; rather we are to persist and keep on admonishing him until we see him change for the better. The reason for this, is because after behaving in a non-worthy manner for a while, one generally won't change after being admonished just one time, rather, all that can really be expected is that the first admonishment will at least stir his soul to make him realize that his behavior is improper and that he needs to repent, and only with continuous rebuke will he hopefully be brought step by step closer to bring his realization to fruition, until we help him reach full repentance.

In view of Rava's understanding, that when the Torah writes 'Rebuke' it implies that, if necessary, one must rebuke his fellow Jew even one hundred times, we

can offer an alternate explanation to the Torah's repetitious words when it writes 'shall you rebuke your fellow Jew'.



The Midrash (כ"ד נ"ד ג) tells us the following in regards to one rebuking another Jew. התוכחה מביאה לידי אהבה שנאמר. הוכח לחכם ויאהבך. היא דעת' דר' ר יוסי בר חנינא דאמר כל אהבה שאין עמה ר' Yosi bar Chanina said "Rebuke leads to love, as it states; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you". This exposition is based on R' Yosi bar Chanina's own opinion, who said, "Any love that is not accompanied by rebuke is not true love".

We find that this was indeed the way our great Sages conducted themselves when they were on the receiving end of rebuke, as is related in the Gemara in Arachin; אמר רבי יוחנן בן נורי מעיד אני עלי שמים, וארץ שהרכבה פעמים לקה עקיבא על ידי שהייתי קובל עליו לפני רבי שמעון ברבי וכל שכן שהוספתי בו אהבה. R' Yochanan ben Nuri said, "I call on heaven and earth as my witness that many times Akiva was rebuked harshly on account of me, for I used to complain about him to R' Shimon BeRebbi, and it only caused him to love me all the more".



According to this we can explain why the Torah commands us to rebuke our fellow Jew in this repetitious manner; 'Rebuke, shall you rebuke your fellow Jew'.

Initially, the Torah commands us to 'Rebuke' our fellow Jew, which implies that one must admonish his fellow Jew, even up to one hundred times. This is all alluded to in the initial commandment of 'Rebuke'. Subsequently, the Torah commands us a second time 'shall you rebuke', to indicate that although one is indeed commanded to rebuke his fellow Jew a second and even a third time until he fully repents, nevertheless, only if the first admonishment was considered to be a valid 'Rebuke', that it caused the admonished one to love his admonisher, can one go on to rebuke a second time. But if the first rebuke did not have the intended outcome of bringing about love, then it isn't considered to be valid, and even if needed, he may not give any additional admonishment. In other words, a second rebuke may only follow a properly given and perceived first rebuke.

Accordingly, the Passuk would be read and understood as follows. 'Rebuke', and if the rebuke proceeds as intended, to bring out love and respect between the admonished and the admonisher and is thus considered a valid 'Rebuke', then, if necessary proceed to rebuke successively until it causes the sinner to repent.

(זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ד)

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**U.S.A 716-229-4808**  
**London 0333-300-2515**

Published and distributed by The International Organization to Disseminate the Works of The Zera Shimshon  
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