

טוב הקהילה

בס"ד

'יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

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טיב המערכת

עננו סולח ומוחל עננו

Answer us, You Who forgives and pardons, answer us

A man approached a Rav and asked, "Why do we say *selichos*? Last year we came and begged with all our hearts for forgiveness and we promised that we would not stumble again. Now, a year has passed and we stand in the same situation, over the course of the year we did what we did, and now we beg of HaKadosh Baruch Hu that He forgive us? Again, we promise that we will not what we did again, who are we serving? Who are we fooling, HaKadosh Baruch Hu?! Does He not know quite well what is in our hearts, and He knows exactly how long our Teshuva will last!"

The Rav answered him, "I will give you a *mashal* [example], the wife of the house cleans her house every year before Pesach, she exerts herself every year. The next year she is in the same situation and she starts all over. Really, maybe it does not pay to clean every year? But everyone knows that if they do not clean the house, dirt will accumulate and they will not be able to clean in their usual way, it will be more difficult to clean. It is only because a thorough cleaning is done every year, can the house be cleaned routinely.

"The same applies to us, the more a person sins, the further he gets from the Creator Yisbarach, and his *neschama* is covered in filth. But when we do Teshuva, we come back closer and cleanse the *neschama*, and if a person does not stop every so often to do Teshuva, after he has distanced himself so much, although we believe that the door to HaKadosh Baruch Hu is always open to receive those who are repentant, the matter the issue is much harder to one who is so far removed."

We are standing at the beginning of the Days of *Selichos* (as per the *minhag* of Ashkenaz, Eidut Hamizrach have already started from the beginning of Elul), and we believe with complete faith that HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepts Teshuva and forgives those who truly return. That is why one who does Teshuva is called a '*Baal Teshuva*', like someone who takes possession of a house is immediately called a '*Baal Habayis*', so too one who does Teshuva is immediately converted into a '*Baal Teshuva*'. May it be His will that we merit to return with complete Teshuva in truth and with a full heart.

- Tiv HaMoadim - Elul

טיב ההשגחה

'כי אם בשובו מדרכו וחיה'

'But rather the return from one's way and live'

On Chol HaMoed, the entire family went on a trip, we were nine men including the driver. It came Mincha time, and the driver who told us he would make sure we would reach a settlement with a minyan for Mincha. He was not careful with the time, and we found ourselves on top of Mount Bentel [a dormant volcano in the northeastern part of the Golan Heights], close to the Syrian border, nine men above Bar Mitzvah with fifteen minutes before sunset...

Some said it was extenuating circumstances and we should *daven* by ourselves. I said the famous words of the Baal Shem Tov, 'If there are nine men, *b'ezras Hashem* the tenth man will come' and so let's wait. Some made fun of me and said, there isn't a living soul in the area, from where will a tenth man suddenly show up? A few minutes before sunset, a car passed before us. I signaled to him to stop, and through the window I saw an older man with a long gray ponytail, and a young man sitting next to him who looked like his son, the same appearance as the father. For a moment I hesitated, but still, he kindly asked how could he help? I explained to him that we were missing a tenth for a minyan and perhaps he could complete the minyan for us. To my joy, he agreed and got out of the car. I gave him a *kippah* [*yarmulka*] and searched for a siddur for him, but then to my surprise he said in Yiddish, '*Es iz beseider, ich ken oys ausenveinig!*' "It's fine, I know it by heart!"

We *davened* Mincha and his *shemonah esrei* took a long time, as a flood of tears poured from his eyes, he was so emotional.

After the Tefillah he told me, "When I was little, I learned in a *chassidische* yeshiva, and it has now been fifty years that I have not *davened*. Even now I do not *daven*, but you asked me to do you a favor, and I saw how important it is to you to *daven* with a minyan, I was moved to join the minyan. Suddenly, the emotional words of the Tefillah came back to me!!!"

At first, I was angry with the driver for not bringing a tenth man for the minyan as agreed, but now I understood that we were stopped by Heaven so that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not forsake even one *neschama* even after fifty years, HaKadosh Baruch Hu waits and tries to bring His lost children back!!!

ה.פ.

וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת דְּבַרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבּוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם
יְהִי לִי כִּי בִשְׂרָרוֹת לִבִּי אֶלְךָ לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הָרוּחַ אֶת הַצְּמָאָה: לֹא
יֵאבֵד ה' סֶלַח לוֹ כִּי אִזְ יַעֲשֶׂן אִפְּ ה' וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הוּא וּרְבָצָה בּוֹ כָּל
הָאֱלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה וּמָחָה ה' אֶת שְׁמוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:
(כט:יח-יט)

And it will be when he hears the words of this oath, he will
bless himself in his heart, saying, "I will have peace, though I go
as my heart sees fit", thereby adding the drunk with the thirsty.
Hashem will not be willing to forgive him, for then Hashem's
anger and His wrath will smoke against that man, and the
entire oath written in this Book will come down upon him, and
Hashem will erase his name from under heavens. (29:18-19)

Rashi explains: Thereby adding the drunk – For I will add on a
punishment for him for that which he had done until now
unintentionally, and I would have overlooked them, but now he
caused that I should combine them with that was intentional. And
I will take My due from him for all of it. And similarly, Targum
Onkelos renders this that I will add for him the unintentional sins
onto the intentional sins.

We are about to enter the days where 'kol dod dofek' – 'the voice of
my beloved knocks' at the doorways of the hearts and asks of
'Keneses Yisrael' that is compared to a dove (Sanhedrin 95b), 'pischi li
achosi yonasi samasi' – 'open your heart to Me, My sister, My dove,
My perfection' (Shir Hashirim 5:2), 'hareini es mareich' – show Me
your powerful gaze', 'hashmi'eini es koleich' – let Me hear your voice',
'ki koleich areiv umareich naaveh' – 'for your voice is sweet and your
countenance comely' (2:14). Keneses Yisrael responds longingly,
'tzamah lecha nafshi kamah lecha besari' – 'my soul thirsts for You,
my flesh longs for You' (Tehillim 63:2), for it is known that something
in its time is good. Now is the appropriate time for this, and so,
everyone wants to grab hold of the boat of Teshuva and sail it to the
shore of Teshuva.

However, there are some among us who want to return (repent) and
appease their Creator, but they are too ashamed to do this, knowing
that a year ago they appeased Him and promised Him to accept that
they would not go back to their evil ways. But then the days of
Teshuva are replaced by routine days, and they too continue their
routine life, and they are distracted from what they accepted upon
themselves, and they cannot keep them properly. Now, how can they
answer their Master? True, the matter bothers them that are again
distanced from their King, and they very much yearn to appease Him
again, but if they come again to the King to beseech Him, will He listen
to them at all? He will surely not believe them, and He will expel them
from before Him, since in the past they did not keep what their
mouths uttered, and they have proven that there is no substance to
their words.

Indeed, they have to contemplate that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has set
this order in the world. Every year we are commanded to celebrate
the fast of Yom Kippur, afflict ourselves, and in exchange we are
promised atonement, as it states (Vayikra 16:29-30), 'בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי
בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנּוּ אֶת נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם... כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפַּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהַר אֶתְכֶם
"In the seventh month, on the tenth of
the month, you shall afflict yourselves... for on this day He shall
provide atonement for you to cleanse you, from all your sins before
Hashem will you be cleansed'. If the view of HaKadosh Baruch Hu was
in line with their view, He would not have commanded to afflict every
year to bring atonement, except to those who have not repented
even once. But those who have broken their promises, He would not
have given them the chance to do Teshuva again. Since we see that
even those who have repented are commanded again on the

affliction and are promised atonement, it is a sign that no matter
what their situation is, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is not disgusted by their
Teshuva and even after they have reneged on their promises, He
agrees to renew the covenant with them and forgive them for their
sins, for He knows their difficult yetzer and their weakness because
they are human. He knows that their will in the past was sincere and
true, and they were not rebelling.

Once a person hears these words, and he is pleased that the hope of
Teshuva is not lost, then his yetzer appears to dissuade him from
Teshuva by telling him, 'You see that even after you have decided to
do Teshuva, in the end when you come to a challenge you do not
have the strength to stand up against it. If so, even now when you
decide to repent, who will guarantee that you will stand by your
word? If so, know yourself, do not do Teshuva, perhaps in the end
you will remain a sinner, chas v'shalom.'

The person must know that our Creator has done a great chesed
[kindness] for us by commanding us to do Teshuva every year, for
even if the person does not hold onto his Teshuva, there is still an
advantage, and we will explain it according to the custom of the
world. We see that every Erev Shabbos we clean the house from the
dirt that has accumulated throughout the week, and also before
Pesach we give the house a deep clean, even though we know that
the house will not stay clean for long, and right after the cleaning, dirt
will already start accumulating. Yet, we clean the house because we
know that if we do not clean, the dirt will accumulate even more, to
the point that we will not be able to clean it. The same applies to
Teshuva. We must know that every sin distances the person from his
Maker, so it is fitting that every year we do Teshuva to get closer to
Hashem, even though we will again be distant, it will not be as
distant, and we will be able to get closer. But if we do not do Teshuva
from time to time, one will be so far from his Creator that he will no
longer want to repent, and will remain with many sins until he dies...

This topic is hinted at in the posukim before us and in Rashi's
explanation. We see two novelties; First we see 'I go as my heart sees
fit', he only fulfills 'adding drink with the thirsty', as Rashi explains
that once he sins intentionally, then he is also punished for the
unintentional sins. As long as the person does not sin intentionally,
he is not punished for the unintentional ones. This is a great novelty,
for even if the person acted unintentionally, he is a sinner, and
sometimes when he does not repent, they are forced to punish him
so he will be forgiven with tribulations. We also see that if one says,
'I go as my heart sees fit' then he will also fulfill 'Hashem will not be
willing to forgive him'. This does not match what is stated (Yechezkel
18:32) – 'כי לא אחפץ במות המת נאם אדני ה' והשיבו וחיו' – 'For I do not
desire the death of the one who should die, the word of the L-rd,
Hashem. Turn yourself back and live!'

But we can explain these words, for one who says, 'I go as my heart
sees fit' demonstrates that he has given up on Teshuva and agrees
with the advice of the yetzer that Teshuva is not for him. It is true that
our Creator even wants the Teshuva of the wicked, but the Teshuva
He demands of him is a very great Teshuva. This is because he has
not done Teshuva every year and he is very distanced from Hashem
Yisbarach and does not fathom the depth of his sin. Therefore, it is
hard to do the Teshuva that is fit for him. Therefore, even though
HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants Teshuva, He will not want to forgive him,
since at the end of the day he has not done the necessary Teshuva.
He will also not be saved from his unintentional sins, since the person
who wants Teshuva, HaKadosh Baruch Hu can wait for him for his
annual Teshuva, and he will not have to be punished, but on who
gives up on Teshuva, Hashem cannot hold back His anger. We see the
advantage of annual Teshuva, we should grab the opportunity.