

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

*In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ע"ה and Tzvi Daniel ע"ה ben א"ט David שי' Ainsworth
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein*

Erev Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Mos, 5782 – April 29, 2022

ערב שבת פרשת אחרי-מות, כ"ח ניסן, ה'תשפ"ב

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Adapted from
Keter Shem Tov

Turn It Around

“Rava saw Rav Hamnuna praying at great length. He exclaimed: They abandon *chayei olam*, eternal life, for the sake of *chayei sha'ah*, temporal life!” (Talmud, Shabbos 10a). “Eternal life is Torah study, whereas prayer is for the sake of temporal life—for healing, for peace, and for sustenance” (Rashi).

Torah study is *chayei olam*, literally “the life of

the world,” because it teaches us how to conduct ourselves when dealing with the affairs of this world. Prayer is called *chayei sha'ah* because *sha'ah*, “[limited] time,” can also mean “to turn”—and the service of prayer teaches us how we must turn to G-d and beseech him.

Keter Shem Tov add. 94

גאולה

GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

Ready Or Not...

A cryptic Midrash states that when Moshe heard Hashem articulate the verse, “*You shall rise before the advanced of age*” (Acharei-Mos 19:32), he exclaimed, “*Arise, maiden of Israel!*”

We can explain this Midrash in light of the Gemara’s teaching that one must respect an elderly person even if he is utterly ignorant, and that Rabbi Yochanan would rise in deference to an elderly non-Jewish man because a long life inevitably means more challenges and suffering.

The Ohr HaChaim teaches that the Jewish people are like G-d’s daughter who He has sold temporarily into exile as a maidservant. He explains that we deserve to be redeemed early due to the

manifold suffering we have experienced during exile. Accordingly, when Moshe heard the verse, “*You shall rise before the advanced of age*,” he exclaimed, “*Arise, maiden of Israel!*” for the Jewish people—G-d’s maiden—is advanced in age, having spent far too many years in exile, and having undergone extensive suffering as a result. Even if we are otherwise unworthy—like the elderly man who is entirely ignorant—there is an obligation to “*rise before the advanced of age*”—G-d must cause the advanced of age to rise with the arrival of the final redemption.

Divrei Yo'el

The Life of a Mitzvah

You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do and live by them (Acharei-Mos 18:5).

This verse illustrates a general rule which applies to all practical Mitzvot. Consider the Mitzvah of Tzitzit. Tzitzit are initially mundane strings, bereft of holiness. But through the actual performance of the Mitzvah of Tzitzit on the corners of our garments, we interconnect all the spiritual levels of G-dliness, i.e., Divine thought and speech, until these lofty levels rest upon the physical Tzitzit, infusing the strings with holiness.

“You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do” hints to the gap bridged between thought and action. “My stat-

utes” (חקותי) shares a root with the Hebrew word “engraving” and hints to the letters engraved within Divine thought, while “shall do” refers to performing the act of the commandment. When the extremes of Divine thought and human action are joined by the performance of any practical Mitzvah, they infuse that act with holiness and life. Thus the verse concludes: “and live by them,” a phrase which may also be translated: “and [place] life within them.”

Ohr Torah, par. 110

First or Foremost

You shall keep My decrees and laws, which man shall do, and live in them... (Acharei-Mosh 18:5)

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch wrote:

When my grandmother, the Rebbetzin Rivkah, was eighteen years old she fell ill, and the doctor ordered that she eat immediately upon waking. But my grandmother, who did not wish to eat before prayer, would pray at an early hour and only afterwards eat breakfast.

When her father-in-law, Rabbi Menachem

Mendel of Lubavitch, heard of this, he said to her: “A Jew must be healthy and strong. Concerning the precepts of the Torah it is written “live in them”- one is to infuse life into the mitzvot; and in order to infuse life into the mitzvot, one must be fit and joyful.”

Concluded Rabbi Menachem Mendel: “Better to eat in order to pray, than to pray in order to eat.”

The Essence of Repentance

The Law:

Regarding the verbal formulation of confession, Rambam writes: “How does one confess: He states: ‘I implore You, God, I sinned, I transgressed, I committed iniquity before You by doing the following.... Behold, I regret and am embarrassed for

my deeds. I promise never to repeat this act again” (*Hilchos Teshuva* 1:1).

Later, however, Rambam rules that a more succinct formulation is acceptable:

“The confessional prayer customarily recited by all Israel is: ‘For we have sinned....’ This is the

essence of the confessional prayer” (*Hilchos Tes-huva* 2:8).

The Question:

The three words used for sin, “I sinned, I transgressed, I committed iniquity,” refer to various degrees of malicious intent of the sinner. “Sin” refers to unintentional acts, “transgression” refers to intentional acts, and “iniquity” refers to rebellious acts performed in defiance of G-d (*Yoma* 36b).

Why, then, is the “essence of the confessional prayer” only “we have sinned” which refers to unintentional sins but does not encompass the more severe transgressions?

The Preface to the Explanation:

The Talmud relates:

“Rabbi Masya ben Charash asked Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya... Have you heard the teaching that there are four distinctions in the process of atonement...? Rabbi Elazar responded to him: There are three distinctions, and repentance is necessary with each one.

- 1) If one violates a positive *mitzvah* and repents, he is forgiven immediately...
- 2) If one violates a prohibition and repents, repentance suspends his punishment and Yom Kippur atones for his sin...
- 3) If one commits a transgression that warrants *karet* or a sin punishable by death from the earthly court and then repents, repentance and Yom Kippur suspend his punishment, and suffering absolves and completes the atonement...
- 4) But one who has caused desecration of God’s name, his repentance has no power to suspend punishment, nor does Yom Kippur have power to atone for his sin, nor does suffering alone have power to absolve him. Rather, all these suspend punishment, and death absolves him” (*Yoma* 86a).

Even though four distinctions are enumerated here, Rabbi Elazar only considers atonement granted in one’s lifetime to be a relevant form of atonement. He does not consider the fourth scenario, where one who desecrates G-d’s name is granted atonement through death, to be part of the process of atonement. Rabbi Masya, on the other hand, does consider this final case to be a distinct form of atonement.

The Alter Rebbe opens his work on repentance with this Talmudic passage and omits the clause about one who desecrated G-d’s name (See *Iggeres Hateshuva*, ch. 1). This implies that in the context of repentance only the first three forms of atonement are relevant. Why is this so?

The essence of the *mitzvah* of repentance, according to the Alter Rebbe, “is simply the abandonment of sin,” and not the regret over the past or verbal confession (*Ibid.*). The objective of repentance is for the person to reform their future behavior. Therefore, abandoning the sin and never returning to it again constitutes repentance. Nonetheless, the desired culmination of repentance is for the person to be reconciled with G-d, to become close to G-d again. This is the meaning of atonement; the soul is cleansed from its association with evil and is “desirable and precious before G-d.”

Thus, repentance consists of two steps: a) repentance itself, the practical reformation of future behavior; b) the culmination of repentance, the soul’s atonement and drawing closer to G-d through experiencing contrition over the past and verbal confession.

Now, *mitzvos* can only be performed by a soul within a body, because the purpose of the *mitzvah* is to refine the physical world. Applied to repentance, this means that the forms of atonement that are relevant to the *mitzvah* of repentance are those that affect the embodied soul. Only if atonement and closeness to G-d can be achieved in this world can it be considered the culmination of the *mitzvah* of repentance.

Thus, Rabbi Masya considers there to be four forms of atonement because he is speaking about atonement of the soul detached from the context of repentance as a *mitzvah*. Rabbi Elazar, however, speaks of atonement in the context of repentance, and therefore only considers scenarios where atonement is granted to a living body.

Dual Confession:

The same distinction between the essence of repentance and its desired culmination can be applied to confession. A) the essence of confession is to express one’s commitment to changing future behavior, therefore, saying “I have sinned,” a bare-bones admission to guilt, is sufficient. B) the desired culmination of confession is to express one’s contrition over the past and desire to draw close to

G-d once again, and this is accomplished through a more detailed confession, “I sinned, I transgressed, I committed iniquity before You by doing the following. Behold, I regret and am embarrassed for my deeds....”

The Deeper Dimension:

Kabbalah explains that the four distinctions in atonement correspond to the four worlds: a) neglecting a positive *mitzvah* corresponds to the world of *Asiyah*; b) transgressing a negative *mitzvah* corresponds to the world of *Yetzirah*; c) a transgression that warrants *karet* corresponds to the world of *Beri'ah*; d) desecrating G-d's name corresponds to the world of *Atzilus*.

Rabbi Elazar does not count the atonement corresponding to the world of *Atzilus* (desecration of G-d's name), for there is no semblance of a created being there, it is transparently G-dly, and so it is not relevant to the reality of an embodied soul.

The Talmud Yerushlami interprets Rabbi Elazar differently—the atonement for neglecting a positive *mitzvah* is not counted in his three categories of atonement. This would correspond to

not counting the atonement of the world of *Asiyah*. Kabbalah sometimes identifies the number three with the spectrum of Divine light, for there are three worlds (*Atzilus*, *Beri'ah* and *Yetzirah*) where G-d's light is manifest, and the number four with the Divine capacity for concealment, for the fourth world, *Asiyah*, is devoid of revealed Divinity. Thus, in this explanation, Rabbi Elazar counts only “three” forms of atonement, corresponding to the three worlds of Divine light.

There is consonance between these two divergent explanations: Chassidus explains that the world of *Atzilus* is intimately connected to the world of *Asiyah*—for the revelation of the Divine reality in *Atzilus* comes about through Divine service performed in the physical reality of *Asiyah*.

Thus the two interpretations of Rabbi Elazar—that he omits either the atonement corresponding to the world of *Atzilus* (desecrations of G-d's name) or the atonement corresponding to the world of *Asiyah* (neglecting a positive *mitzvah*)—are related, for these two worlds are interconnected.

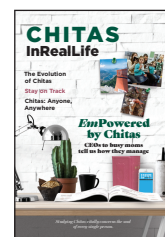
Likkutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 193ff.

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

BOOK	SECTION
Chumash – Rashi*	Acharei-Mos, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 140 – 144
Tanya*	Likutei Amarim Chapter 44. עמ' 126 - נעשה טבע.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Negative Mitzvah #317 and Positive Mitzvah #178
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Taharah – Hilchos She'ar Avos Hatum'ah, Chapter 11
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Shoftim – Hilchos Sanhedrin, Chapters 25 – 26; Hilchos Eidus Chapter 1

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