

# A Torah Minute com™

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## Never Despair of Forgiveness, However Great the Sin

Rabbenu the Hida, 'a"h, comments on the Pasuq (verse), תִּשָּׁב אִנוֹשׁ עַד דָּכָא "You return man to dust" (Tehillim 90:3), that our Rabbis give a wonderful explanation to it. It teaches us how a man is forbidden to despair of being able to repent, no matter how severe his transgressions. Even if a person committed the most serious sins, repentance can save him.

"דכא" (dust), is an acronym in Hebrew for "דם" (blood), "כפירה" (denial), and "אשה" (woman). This alludes to the three cardinal sins, idolatry, forbidden relations and murder. "דם" (blood) refers to murder, "כפירה" (denial) refers to idolatry and "אשה" (woman) is a reference to forbidden relations.

When the verse says, "You return man to dust", it is telling us that even regarding these three most serious transgressions, repentance can still atone for a person and cleanse him. Additionally, the word for return (תִּשָּׁב), contains the same letters as "Shabbath". This comes to teach us that when a person wishes to raise himself and return to repentance, he must first of all strengthen his observance of Shabbath.

(See Lehem Min Hashamayim)

## Niṣabim: How to Hold on to the Land of Israel

"וּבִחַרְתָּ בַחַיִּים ... לְשִׁבֹּת עַל-הָאָדָמָה" "And you shall choose life ... to dwell on the land" (Debarim, 30:19-20). The Parasha of Niṣabim always falls before Rosh Hashanah. There is much in it to guide us on the Yom HaDin (judgment day), as to what is required to receive the blessings we desire. A case in point is the desire of every Jew to have our own land where we can live in peace without fear of our neighbors, or of governments in far away lands who try to impose their will upon us.

The Torah promises us here, that we will dwell in our land, on condition that we keep the commandments and do absolute Teshubah (repentance) to our Father in Heaven. This is in accordance with what Rashi tells us. He says that "You shall choose life", is like a person says to his son, "Choose a good portion for yourself from my land" and stands him on the best part and says to him, "Choose this".

The Land of Israel is an incredible gift which was given to the Jewish people alone. G-d gives us clear instructions as to how we have to behave in order to dwell in it and hold on to it.

(See Dibrei Mordekhai, Niṣabim, Parparaoth)



מדרש בן איש חי  
Midrash BEN ISH HAI

For the 'Ilui Neshamah of  
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h.  
יעקב אליהו עבדאללה פרג' חיים בן רחל, ע"ה

## The Shofar's hint for Teshubah

A Shofar as we know has two openings, a small one which is placed in the mouth and a larger opening through which the sound comes out. When blowing the Shofar the smaller opening, which is in the mouth, is lower than the larger opening, which as you hold the Shofar, is higher up.

This is a hint to a Ba'al Teshubah (one who wishes to repent), that he must lessen the enjoyment of this world, because the lower portion of the Shofar is small. However, in matters above, meaning the spiritual side, just as the higher end of the Shofar has a large opening, so too, we must be very generous in all areas of spirituality.

(See Ben Ish Hai, Shana Aleph, Parashath Nissabeem)



## Priorities in making Teshubah (in repenting)

I have often spoken about how, when people realize that repentance is called for, whether before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, or G-d forbid, because there is some crisis in the world, that often they feel that instead of doing what is required to make real Teshubah (repentance), they will find some other way, such as fasting and the like, and feel that this is sufficient.

There is an interesting analogy in Mayim Hayyim. It is a story of a man who has a nose bleed, and as we know, when a person has a nose bleed, the blood makes a mess of his clothes. So now the person with the nose bleed has two problems to take care of: 1. they have to find the medication that will stop the nose bleed, and 2. they have to change their clothes. They can't walk around everywhere with clothes with blood on them. The question is, which is more important and comes first? The answer is obvious. There is no point changing your clothes before you fix your nose bleed, because as soon as you change your clothes (if your nose is still bleeding), your new clothes will also get dirty. So first and foremost, you must find the correct medication to stop the nose bleed and then you change your clothes.

So too, when a person wishes to make Teshubah (wishes to repent), he or she must do what is required for repentance, which is: - Hara'ah - regretting their actions up to this point, - 'Azibath Ha'et - leaving the sins and not doing them any more, and - Widdui - confessing one's sins. Ta'anioth (fasts) and other Siggufim, are additional. First and foremost you must fix your nose bleed, and then you can change your clothes.

(See Mayim Hayyim, by Hakham Yoseph Hayyim 'a"h, - Hasigguf Kethablin Bilbad)

## Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

### What is Our Forgiveness Dependent On?

The Gemara of Rosh Hashana (17;a), mentions an eye opening incident, which took place when Rab Huna was lying sick in bed. He was visited by Rab Papa who, upon seeing Rab Huna's critical condition, told his family members, in Rab Huna's presence, to prepare his shrouds for him. Miraculously, Rab Huna recovered. Rab Papa, who heard of his recovery, was too embarrassed to see Rab Huna.

Sometimes later the two scholars met. Rab Papa asked Rab Huna to explain to him what happened, since it was clear that Rab Huna was lying on his death bed. Rab Huna's answer was an astounding one. "Indeed I was facing the gates of death," he explained, "the decree was, that it was time for me to pass on to the next world. However, that decree was changed!"

Why was the decree changed?

Rab Huna explained that the Holy One blessed be He said to the angels: "Since he (Rab Huna), did not respond harshly, when he heard Rab Papa instructing his family to prepare him for his 'last journey', it would be appropriate to forgive him and grant him life."

(To be continued)