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By the Hakham

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## Niṣabim: Elul, Repentance and Shabbath

The month of Elul is a time for Teshubah (repentance) and introspection. Each night it is appropriate for us to examine all our deeds closely. In truth, this must be done throughout the year, but at the very least from Elul till Yom Kippur.

It says in Parashath Niṣabim, וּשְׁבַת עַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (And you shall return [repent] to the L-rd your G-d). The word "שבת" (Shabta - you shall repent), in Hebrew, has the same letters as the word Shabbath. From this we can learn that repentance will not happen unless there is keeping of Shabbath. And keeping Shabbath, we are taught, is equal to keeping the whole Torah.

Each one of the Miṣwoth corresponds to a particular part of our body. Each time we transgress, the corresponding part of the body is affected and rectifying the damage done to all the various parts of the body can be a very lengthy and cumbersome process requiring us to do heaps of Miṣwoth. However, if a person keeps Shabbath correctly, in all its detail, it is as if the person did indeed do bundles of Miṣwoth.

We see from this how careful we must be to ensure that we study the laws of Shabbath to be able to keep it as required, since the benefit and reward is very great indeed.

(See Kaf Haḥayyim, 571:24 and Hid"ā, Naḥal Qedummim, Parashath Niṣabim)

## Save the Better Food for Shabbath Morning

If one does not have sufficient money to buy wine for both the Friday night and Shabbath morning meals, as well as food for the meals, wine for the night takes precedence. There is a Beraitha which says that the honor of the day precedes the honor of the night. This pertains to other matters connected with the meal.

The morning Shabbath meal, therefore, should be honored by eating a kind of food that one is fond of, or else one should add a food that was not eaten at night. If one has sufficient wine for the Qiddush of both meals but the wine for one is of a premium quality while the other is more basic, the basic one should be used at night and the higher quality one during the day.

In fact, this applies to any kind of food or fruit, that if there are two different qualities, the better one should be kept for the morning. The exception is if the fruit in question requires a Sheheheyanu. In this case, one should not delay, but should eat it at night.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, 271:3. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid, Oth 16. Derekh HaTorah, Shabbath, 7:25)



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## Three Prerequisites for Repentance

Rabbenu the Hida, 'a"h, writes that when a man stands before G-d with the intention of repenting and asking for his life to be spared, he needs first to consider how he should conduct himself and what he should feel, inasmuch as returning to G-d is concerned.

The first thing a person must realize is that the very act of accepting a person's repentance, is a great kindness, which goes beyond the letter of the law. Secondly, a person must consider and recognize his transgressions. He must know where he sinned and in what ways he wronged and angered his Creator.

Thirdly, a person must confess, with a broken heart and a pained soul. It is not enough to merely recite the words by rote, and expect that this will be sufficient for his repentance to be accepted.

(See Debarim Ahadim, Hida)

## The Day Before Rosh Hashanah

During the day before Rosh Hashanah starts, one should make the effort to return to G-d (repent), with all one's heart. Even one who is unable to fast should repent with all his heart. One should spend the day involved in the study of the Torah and the performance of the Mitzvot (commandments). One should not take one's mind off Teshubah (repentance), the entire day.

One should ask forgiveness from one's friend on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and not wait till the eve of Yom Kippur. Rather, one should do it early and ask his friend to forgive him for any harm or pain he may have caused him.

There is a custom to visit the graves during the day before Rosh Hashanah starts. One may not ask the deceased directly for help. However, it is permitted to ask the soul of the one who passed away to pray to G-d on the person's behalf, for G-d to have mercy on that person.

(See Ben Ish Hai, 1st year, Nishabim, Oth 2. Kaf Hachayim, 581:59)

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

### Turning a New Page

Our Rabbis of blessed memory teach us that the process of Teshuba, (repentance), may be done on two levels: repentance out of fear (of punishment) and repentance out of love (to our Merciful Father in Heaven). It goes without saying, that Teshuba out of love is on a higher level, but at the same time, it is harder since it goes against our very nature.

Let us look, for example, at someone who wants to make an illegal U-turn. Many people will make an illegal U-turn, after checking that there is no policeman present. Far fewer will adhere to the rules because this is the right thing to do. Similarly, telling Hashem: "I will do whatever You want me to, not because I am scared of Your punishment, nor because of the reward that awaits me, but merely because of my love to You", is a statement that is unexpected. Most human beings would do or refrain from doing something based on what they will get in return. When G-d sees that one goes against his nature and does His will out of pure love, He, in return for our unconditional love, will change us into totally new people!

(To be continued)