

# The CHASSIDUS PERSPECTIVE with Reb Yoel Kahn

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## A HIGHER AWARENESS

In the first *perek* of *Igeres Hateshuvah* the Alter Rebbe explains that in order to fulfill the mitzvah of teshuvah, all one needs to do is to renounce the sin and sincerely resolve to fulfill Hashem's Will from now on. In the next two *perakim* he continues that in order to return to the state of divine affection he had enjoyed before the sin, he must bring a *korban* (in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*), fast (after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed), or give tzedakah (now that we can't fast as often).

In *Perek Daled* the Alter Rebbe continues that these ideas are only necessary to *complete* the *kaparah*; teshuvah itself, however, is comprised solely of a sincere return to Hashem, as explained in *Perek Alef*. However, he is not satisfied with what he had explained earlier. The Alter Rebbe enters a lengthy discussion of what teshuvah is about, based on the Zohar's interpretation that teshuvah means *tashuv hei*, the return of the letter *hei*. A sin causes the final *hei* of Hashem's name to descend into *golus*, and through doing teshuvah one brings back the *hei* to its previous state. This is something one must be aware of as soon as he begins doing even the most basic level of teshuvah.

### "BASIC" KNOWLEDGE

This begs for an explanation. Seemingly, this explanation only tells us what teshuvah *accomplishes*, but it doesn't give any insight to what a person must know to actually *do* teshuvah. Why must a person know about this concept as soon as he begins doing teshuvah?

What's more, the Alter Rebbe continues that he must also be aware of the concept of *teshuvah ila'ah*, the return of the first *hei* of Hashem's name!

What is *teshuvah ila'ah*? In *Perek Ches* the Alter Rebbe explains that *teshuvah ila'ah* refers to the return of the *neshamah* to its state of existence before descending to this world, and furthermore,

to its state before it was "blown" by Hashem to exist as a separate entity (just as a person's breath is one with his heart before being blown).

This seems counterintuitive. The descent of the *neshamah* to become a separate entity is something entirely independent of a person's *avodah*; Hashem is the one who "blew" and created the *neshamah*. Yet, the idea of returning the *neshamah* to such a sublime state is a concept one must

be aware of right away, while perfecting his image so he should be as beloved as before the sin—something in which *he* is at fault—is of only secondary importance!

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"The idea of returning the *neshamah* to such a sublime state is a concept one must be aware of right away."

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### A DEEPER CONNECTION

The four letters of Hashem's name exist within every Yid. The final *hei*, parallel to the *sefirah* of *malchus*, represents the awareness of a Yid that Hashem is his king and that he, as his subject, must fulfill His commands.

When a person sins and disobeys the command of his King, it demonstrates that there is a problem with his final *hei*. What, indeed, is the underlying cause of this flaw?

The connection of a Yid with Hashem is much deeper than that of a servant and a king, where the two exist as separate entities. A Yid's relationship begins much earlier, as his *neshamah* exists above; and furthermore—as it stood before having been blown by Hashem, when it was completely unified with Him—ישראל וקודשא בריך הוא כולא חד.

It's true that this is an extremely lofty level that can only be attained by great tzaddikim. However, when a person studies and reflects on this concept, he will tell himself: True, I am not holding at such a level. But since the truth is that I am one with Hashem, to the very least I must follow His commands and refrain from sinning!

If a person is not aware of this concept and views his relationship with Hashem in the limited scope of a subject and a king, he may stumble and transgress. But when he realizes that his association is much deeper than that, because in essence he and Hashem are one, his resolve to follow His Will is much more passionate and steadfast and he will be less predisposed to disobey His command.

## A HIGHER AWARENESS

This is also the reason Chassidus often discusses lofty levels that cannot be achieved by the average individual. Even though they may be beyond our reach, they affect the way we view our connection to Hashem and how we perform the *avodah* that does pertain to us.

The Rebbe Rashab explains in *Kuntres Eitz Chaim* that while a person must strive to reach the level of *yichuda tata'ah*, the level of *yichuda ila'ah* is beyond the reach of most people. Nonetheless, in order to accomplish the *avodah* of *yichuda ila'ah*

properly, one must learn about and contemplate on the level of *yichuda ila'ah*.

We find a parallel in Halacha. When a person sells the dates of a palm tree, the *kinyan* can only take effect if the dates have already grown; otherwise they fall under the category of a *davar shelo ba le'olam*, an article that has not yet come into existence, and their ownership cannot be transferred.

Nonetheless, the halacha is that one can sell a *dekel lepeirosav*, a palm tree for the sake of harvesting its fruits. In other words, one can sell the palm tree for the specific purpose of harvesting the dates. Although they have not yet begun to grow, the palm tree is an existing entity.

One can ask: What is the difference between these two cases? Just like the *kinyan* cannot take effect when one sells not-yet-grown fruits, it should not take effect when he sells

a tree for its fruits. Of what consequence is the fact that the tree exists if the buyer has no permission to do anything with it yet?

However, the difference is easily understood. In the first case all we're dealing with are the *fruits* and nothing more. In the second case, by contrast, the object under discussion is the *tree*. True, all he is getting are the fruits, but they are fruits as they are part of the *tree*. The fruits themselves are now different.

This concept can be applied to many areas, including *teshuvah*. When a person views his resolve to fulfill Hashem's Will—the most basic form of *teshuvah*—as an offshoot of a much deeper idea, *teshuvah tata'ah* and even *teshuvah ila'ah*, his *teshuvah* will be imbued with a completely different kind of impetus and energy.

לקו"ש חלק ל"ט הוספות אגרת התשובה ב' For further learning see

“Awareness of levels beyond our reach affect the way we view our connection to Hashem and how we perform our *avodah*.”



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