

Rabbi Yaakov Luban
Executive Rabbinic Coordinator
Kashruth Department of the
Orthodox Union

Shabbos Shuva

רבינו יונה writes in תשובה (שער ד' אות י"ז) שערי תשובה that there are two separate mitzvos of teshuvah. During the entire year we are obligated to do teshuvah if we sin. (Presumably, this is based on the verse (ושבת עד ה' אלקיך (דברים, ל'). On Yom Kippur there is a second mitzvah of teshuvah which is derived from (ויקרא ט"ז) תטהרו לפני ה' תטהרו (ויקרא ט"ז). (The רמב"ם seems to disagree with this view, as he makes no reference to a separate mitzvah of teshuvah on Yom Kippur when discussing the matter in הלכות תשובה פרק ב' הל' ז'. It has been suggested that, the רמב"ם considers תטהרו לפני ה' תטהרו to be a הבהרה, while רבינו יונה sees תטהרו as a mitzvah.) If there is a separate mitzvah of teshuvah on Yom Kippur, then it must differ in some unique manner from the mitzvah of teshuvah of the entire year. In fact there are three obvious distinctions which are reflected in the language used by the Torah to express the mitzvos of teshuvah on Yom Kippur and all year:

- a) During the year, the mitzvah of teshuvah is formulated as ושבת, while on Yom Kippur the mitzvah is described as תטהרו. Apparently, the teshuvah of Yom Kippur must lead to a state of purity, which is not necessarily true of the teshuvah of the entire year.
- b) לפני ה' implies that the בעל תשובה must be cognizant of G-d's presence when repenting on Yom Kippur. The Torah does not impose this requirement during the year.
- c) Year round, there is an independent mitzvah of teshuvah for each transgression, and it is possible to fulfill the mitzvah of teshuvah for one sin even while neglecting to do teshuvah for other transgression. In contrast, if one does not repent for all sins during Yom Kippur the mitzvah of מכל חטאתיכם remains completely unfulfilled. (see משנה ברורה ס' תר"ו). (ס"ק א', ומשנת יעב"ץ או"ח ס' נ"ד).

I would like to explore more fully the nature of the mitzvah of teshuvah of Yom Kippur, and attempt to explain why it has different requirements than the mitzvah of teshuvah of all year.

The גמרא states in פ"ו: יומא דף פ"ו: that מיראה מיראה מיראה accomplishes לו כשגגות תשובה מיראה מיראה מיראה while זדונות נעשות לו כזכויות תשובה מאהבה achieves לו כזכויות תשובה מאהבה. The standard explanation of זדונות נעשות לו כזכויות תשובה מאהבה is that since the עבירה serves as the motivational force which moves a person to do תשובה and draw closer to G-d, the עבירה is transformed into a merit? However, if that is the case, why is it that תשובה מיראה does not also convert זדונות into זכויות? Even when performing תשובה מיראה the person moves closer to G-d, and the transgression should be viewed as a positive entity. This question suggests a different understanding to the phenomenon of זדונות נעשות לו כזכויות תשובה מאהבה.

There is a concept in Kabbalah known as השתלשלות (השתלשלות is discussed at length by (נפש החיים in ר' חיים וולאוין.) The basic underpinnings of השתלשלות are as follows: Although the world appears to self-perpetuate itself, this is not actually so. Every moment G-d continues to will the existence of creation and infuse a life force into all of reality. This being the case, the presence of G-d should always be eminently apparent, and man would not have the capacity to exercise free will. In order to allow for בחירה חפשית, G-d conceals his influence by a process of diminishments known as השתלשלות. השתלשלות can be compared to an astronomer who wishes to view the sun without being blinded by its powerful rays. The scientist sets up a long series of filters. Each filter diminishes the light to a lower level of intensity. When the person looks through the entire row of filters, he is able to safely see the form and shape of the sun. However, in reality, he is viewing a mere shadow of the true image of the brilliant sun. Similarly, after השתלשלות occurs, man views the physical world and does not recognize the Divine sparks that actually sustain its existence.

The world of creation is called עולם, because the Divine's presence is נעלם - hidden and concealed within the physical boundaries of the world. The goal of life is to discover that which is נעלם and trace back the process of השתלשלות to its root source of הקב"ה. In particular, the Torah provides the Jew with the tools to accomplish this task, as we will explain.

Before performing a mitzvah we recite the Kabbalistic formula of לשם יחוד קודשא לשם יחוד קודשא and the שכנינה "for the sake of unification of the הוא בריך הוא ושכינתיה". What does this mean? When man looks superficially at the physical world, it appears to be an independent reality which is not linked to G-d. While performing a mitzvah the Jew locates within the physical object its spirituality. The mitzvah proclaims that the physical world is sustained by the הוא בריך הוא, and has its roots and source in the Divine will. This realization reestablishes the יחוד - the unification of the הוא בריך הוא and the שכנינה. The הוא בריך הוא is the אין סוף - the dimension of G-d that is transcendent and separate from the physical world. In the world of the אין סוף, there is only one reality - that of הקב"ה. אין עוד מלבדו. In contrast, the שכנינה is that aspect of G-d which is שוכן (dwells) in the world around us. The שכנינה appears to co-exist in a world in which other forces and physical realities seem to have independent validity. In anticipation of fulfilling a מצוה, we proclaim the לשם יחוד. This establishes that by performing the מצוה with a physical object we will demonstrate that all of reality is משתלשל from the אין סוף, and everything in the physical world is inextricably connected to הקב"ה. Therefore, there is no dichotomy between the הוא בריך הוא and the שכנינה.

If a mitzvah succeeds in unifying the הוא בריך הוא and the שכנינה and revealing the hidden process of השתלשלות, then an עבירה has the exact opposite effect. An עבירה creates פירוד - division, and proclaims that the physical world is a self - perpetuating entity which is independent and separate from the Creator.

The story of the first sin of man serves as a model for the dynamics of all future עבירות. אדם וחווה were ערומים ולא יתבששו because they saw their bodies and all of creation as a manifestation of the will of G-d. This perception changed with the חטא of עץ הדעת וחווה viewed the tree of knowledge and saw it as לעינים הוא תאוה. The superficial beauty and appeal of the fruit enticed them. They failed to see the השתלשלות that connected the עץ הדעת with the אין סוף. At the

process. Rather, throughout one's life, a person can constantly use the עבירה as a reminder of the השתלשלות that was concealed at the time of his sin.

The מזמור שיר ליום השבת אדם הראשון (בראשית כ"ב: כ"ח) מדרש רבה relates that when he learned that the repentance of קין was accepted. The commentaries explain that שבת and תשובה have the same etymological root. Apparently, שבת and תשובה are related. How is that so? Just as the בעל תשובה restores the יחוד of the שכינה and קודשא בריך הוא, so too does the Jew recognize the chain of השתלשלות every שבת. During the week man is caught up in a frenzy of activity within the physical world, and everything seems so real. Man believes that he possesses independent strength to influence and mold the world around him. On שבת, man withdraws from activity in the world by observing the מלאכות ל"ט and everything comes to a stand still. By being שומר שבת, the Jew testifies that בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ. If the בעל תשובה is successful in reestablishing the יחוד of the שכינה and קודשא בריך הוא, so too is the שומר שבת able to reunite the פירוד between the שכינה and קודשא בריך הוא that he brings about during the week. The יחוד of שבת is beautifully expressed in the words of the זוהר which are recited in ספרד after שבת נוסח קבלת שבת. כגוונא דאינון מתיחדין לעילא באחד אוף הכי איהו. "In the manner that they unify above in oneness, so too do they unify below in the secret of oneness". In essence, the שכינה and קודשא בריך הוא are always unified above, but in this world below, that unity is נעלם, until man brings it about. One way of doing so is by observing the Shabbos. רוא דשבת איהי שבת דאיתחדת לתתא ברוא דאחד. "This is the secret of שבת. She is שבת that is unified in the secret of oneness." Therefore שבת and תשובה are related. The similarity is not only etymological, but is thematic as well.

Based on the above, we can suggest that the essential difference between the תשובה of all year and the תשובה of יום כפור is that one satisfies the requirements of תשובה all year with תשובה מאהבה, while the תשובה of יום כפור necessitates תשובה מיראה.

During the entire year, man can live with false illusions and still fulfill the requirements of תשובה. The בעל תשובה is drawn to sin, but he conquers his desire and holds them in check through his fear of G-d. This is תשובה מיראה. On Yom Kippur, this type of teshuvah is inadequate. It is insufficient to conquer the sin. If there is still a struggle, then the תאוה הוא is yet an active force. If man is still drawn to the forbidden fruit then the פירוד between the שכינה and הקב"ה that was created by the sin has not yet been resolved. Yom Kippur demands a teshuvah that is complete and total. This can only be accomplished by תשובה מאהבה where the בעל תשובה stands לפני ה' and recognizes that all of creation is a manifestation of the will of ה'.

The נדרים דף ל"ב in גמרא states that יום כפור facilitates תשובה מאהבה. The שטן has the numerical equivalent of 364, one short of the 365 days of the solar year. The ר"ן explains that on Yom Kippur the שטן is inactive. The שטן represents the illusionary power in the physical world. On Yom Kippur, the Jew transcends the physical world by practicing the five עינוים and enters a higher plan of existence. The פרקי דר' (יומא פרק ח' אות כ"ד) רא"ש quotes פרקי דר' that a Jew is like a מלאך on Yom Kippur. The שטן has no influence over a מלאך. The שטן can only create the deception of תאוה הוא לעינים in the physical world which is the lowest level of השתלשלות where the יחוד is נעלם. With the שטן silenced, the Jew can recognize the

emptiness of the life he has lived during the past year. Those things that seemed so important and essential are now exposed as a deceptive illusion.

The Torah does not expect man to live as an angel. Indeed, all מצות are performed with physical objects. Man's task is to discover the השתלשלות in the עולם הגשמי and not to distance himself from the physical world. Even minutes before Yom Kippur, the Jew is obligated to eat and drink and discover G-d in mundane activities. Nonetheless, when man sins his vision becomes obscured. He is so overwhelmed by the convincing imagery of the שטן that he must first transcend the physical world and become a מלאך, if only for one day, before he can return to the world of הַחַתּוּר and find the Divine sparks in the natural order of existence.

During the year, no human being is permitted entry into the קדשי קדשים. Even the כהן גדול is denied such access. Only of כפור יום does the כהן גדול step into the Holy of Holies. The קדשי קדשים is that point in the creation where שמים and ארץ are connected. It is the umbilical cord of the universe, where the life force of the הוא בריך קודשא is משתלשל from the heavens to the world of the mundane. During the year, G-d doesn't allow man to enter the קדשי קדשים, because man must live his life in the physical world. It is only on כפור יום, when the Jew transcends the עולם הגשמי and becomes a מלאך for 24 hours, that the כהן גדול is allowed to enter Holiest of Holies as an agent of the Jewish people.

Just as the כהן גדול enters the קדשי קדשי on Yom Kippur, so too do all Jews enter the inner chambers of reality. Yom Kippur ends with נעילה for after נעילה the gates of heaven close. This implies that during Yom Kippur the Jewish people are permitted to walk through the gate and see the world behind the scenes.

At the conclusion of Yom Kippur, the teshuvah process is complete. The Jew proclaims ה' אחד and האלקים הוא ה' as an affirmation of the יחוד of הקב"ה. Then the shofar is blown, and the נעילתה departs. The Jew ceases to be an angel and takes leave of the inner chambers as the נעילתה occurs. However, the Jew is not the same as before. Having ascended to the heavens the Jew can return to the physical world and yet remain cognizant of the שכינה. Significantly, after Yom Kippur the Jew dwells in a succah, a physical but, yet he is keenly aware of the ענני הכבוד and Divine presence.

We now return to the three essential differences between the teshuvah of all year and Yom Kippur that we identified in the beginning of this essay. We believe that these distinctions flow naturally from the dichotomy between תשובה מאהבה and תשובה מיראה.

The תשובה מיראה of all year can be selective. One can overcome his passion for one sin even though he is still incapable of controlling his desires in other areas. In contrast, the תשובה מאהבה of Yom Kippur must be מכל חטאתיכם. By definition, recognition of the יחוד of the שכינה and הוא בריך קודשא cannot occur in a limited fashion. Unification must be universal, or it is no יחוד at all.

Whenever man sins, he foolishly imagines that he can hide from the Almighty, just as אדם and חוה hid in the Garden of Eden (ויתחבא האדם ואשתו... בתוך הגן) until G-d called to them - איכה -

“where are you?” When performing מיראה תשובה in the course of the year, the בעל תשובה can fear reprisal from G-d, even though he continues to believe that G-d remains distant and afar. Not so with מאהבה תשובה on Yom Kippur. If the repentant Jew reconnects the אין סוף to all of reality and recognizes the Divine force throughout creation, then he must sense the presence of הקדוש ברוך הוא wherever he turns. Every blade of grass and every star in the heaven proclaims אין עוד מלבדו. Therefore, a fundamental requirement of the teshuvah of Yom Kippur is that it must be לפני ה'.

Sin corrupts and defiles the individual. In מיראה תשובה which accomplishes that זדונות the sin is not completely eradicated, and the עבירה continues to some degree to tarnish the person's soul. With מאהבה תשובה, זדונות נעשות לו בזכויות, and the corrupting impact of the sin is totally undone and removed. Appropriately, the Torah speaks of achieving טהרה through the teshuvah process of Yom Kippur.

Never before in the history of mankind has the יחוד of the שכינה and הוא ברוך קודשא been so completely concealed as it is today. We are bombarded by visual impressions wherever we turn, and the power of sophisticated illusions has reached a crescendo. Superpowers appear to control the destiny of mankind. Technology, which promises to unlock the very secrets of life itself has become the new G-d of modern man. At times, we may feel overwhelmed by the force and convincing nature of the Satan's masterful work. In moments of despair, we feel incapable of achieving תשובה מאהבה. But G-d has promised לא ואף גם זאת בהיותם בארץ אוביהם לא מאסתים ולא געלתים לכלותם להפר בריתי אתם (ויקרא כו:מד) in the נשמה which is connected to G-d and the ברית to Him is never completely severed. G-d promises that at no point will the גלות be so intense that the Jew cannot find his way back if he so desires.

May we be זוכה on כפור יום to perform מאהבה תשובה so that our זדונות will be נעשות כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם and we will indeed be worthy of לו בזכויות מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה' תטהרו.