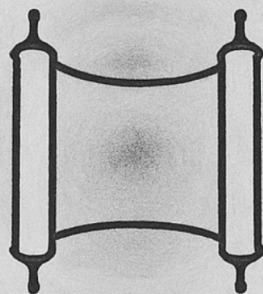


בס"ד

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה



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עשרת ימי תשובה

Siman # 507

It was said regarding the Ten Days of Repentance: it is written in the sefarim (end of tractate ...) that every person should repent, to fast, etc. I will give you an easier form of repentance: if you accept upon yourselves—it is better that one be called a fool all his days and not be a wicked person for even one hour before the Omnipresent (Eduyos 5:6).

אמר בעשרת ימי תשובה כתוב בספרים (ל"ס ס"ס) מסכת ל"ס ססנס פתחלת"ס) שכל אדם יעשה תשובה להתענות וכו'. אני אתן לכם תשובה קלה, אם תקבלו עליכם מוטב שיהיה נקרא שוטה כל ימיו, (ואל יהיה רשע שעה אחת לפני המקום) (עדיית ה, ו

For the judgments of wisdom are ש"פ (Peras Shaar S'amidos ch. 6), which is numerically equivalent to “fool,” for wisdom is the Torah that fills the entire earth, and every person can easily come to attain Ruach HaKodesh—except that the judgments cover it.

כי דינים של חכמה הוא ש"ך (פרע"ס שער סעמיד"ס פרק 6) בגימטריא "שוטה", כי החכמה היא התורה מלאה כל הארץ, וכל אדם בקל יכול לבוא לידי רוח הקדש, אלא שהדינים מכסים אותה.

But if you accept upon yourselves, it is better to be called a fool, etc.—then the judgments will depart and the light will be revealed.

ועם תקבלו עליכם מוטב יהיה נקרא שוטה וכו', יסורו הדינים ויתגלה האור.

[NOTE Summary

In this teaching, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains that the Ten Days of Teshuvah are a time when every person is called to return to Hashem. The sefarim write of fasting and self-affliction, but Rabbi Pinchas offers a deeper and more accessible path: to accept upon oneself to appear like a “fool” in the eyes of others, rather than be wicked even for a moment before G-d. He connects this with the teaching from Eduyos (5:6): “Better to be called a fool all his life than to be wicked one hour before the Omnipresent.” He further shows that “fool” (שוטה) is numerically equivalent to ש"פ, representing the judgments of wisdom. Torah fills the whole earth and makes Ruach HaKodesh accessible to all, but harsh judgments conceal it. By embracing humility—even to the point of seeming foolish—one dispels those judgments and reveals the inner light of wisdom.

Practical Takeaway

Teshuvah is not only about fasting or external practices. The deepest form of return is humility: the willingness to let go of pride and reputation, even to appear foolish in the eyes of others, in order to stay connected to Hashem. This kind of surrender removes the inner “judgments” that cloud clarity, allowing divine light to shine. In daily life, this means choosing integrity before G-d over honor before people.

Chassidic Story

It is told that once Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz was asked why he sometimes acted in ways that seemed odd or beneath his dignity. He replied with a smile: “Better to be called a fool all my life than to be a wicked man for

Reb Pinchas of Koretz**Imrie Pinchas****עשרת ימי תשובה**

even one hour before the Master of the World” (Eduyos 5:6). His students later testified that such acts of self-effacement would often lead to moments of profound inspiration and clarity, as if the concealments of judgment had been lifted. (Source: *Imrei Pinchas HaShalem*, vol. 2, p. 342) **END NOTE]**

Siman # 508

He said regarding the matter of teshuvah: Now there is no teshuvah for all the sins except through Torah, as it is written (Vayikra 7:37), “This is the Torah of the burnt offering, of the meal offering, and of the sin offering, etc.”

אמר מענין התשובה: עכשיו אין תשובה לכל העבירות אלא תורה, כדכתיב (ויקרא ז, ל"ז) זאת התורה לעלה למנחה ולחטאת וכו'.

That is to say: if one is obligated to bring a burnt offering, he should study the Torah portion of the burnt offering. If [he is obligated] a guilt offering, he should study the Torah portion of the guilt offering.

כלומר אם מתחייב עלה ילמד (תורה) שכה [תורת עלה], אשם ילמד (תורה) [תורת אשם].

[NOTE Summary

This teaching emphasizes that in our time, the primary path of teshuvah is Torah study. Whereas in the past atonement was achieved through sacrifices, now one atones by learning the Torah portions that correspond to the offerings. If one would have been obligated to bring a burnt offering, he should learn the laws of the burnt offering; if a guilt offering, then the laws of the guilt offering. Torah study thus becomes the substitute for sacrifices, granting a way to repair sins and reconnect with Hashem.

Practical Takeaway

When we stumble, our teshuvah must be anchored in Torah study. By learning the specific halachos or portions related to atonement, we achieve spiritual rectification in place of offerings. This underscores the power of Torah as not only wisdom but also as a living channel of forgiveness and closeness to Hashem. In daily practice, when one feels distant or blemished, opening a sefer and learning is itself an act of return.

END NOTE]**Siman # 509**

Said [our teacher, Rabbi Raphael, of blessed memory]: The essence of teshuvah is an increase in Torah.

אמר [מוהר"ר רפאל ז"ל], עיקר התשובה ריבוי תורה.

If not, then it does not begin at all.

אן שקט דעעם הויבט זיך נישט אהן.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה

Siman # 510

From the mouth of Rabbi Mordechai, may he live, grandson of Rabbi Binyamin Ze'ev, of blessed memory, who heard in the name of the pious rabbi, our teacher Rabbi Velvel of Zbarizh, of blessed memory, son of the great rabbi, our teacher Rabbi Michel [of Zlotchov], of blessed memory:

מפי רבי מרדכי נ"ו נכד רבי בנ'מין זאב ז"ל, ששמע בשם של הקסיד הרב מוהר"ר וועלוול מזבאריש ז"ל: בן הרב הגדול מוה"ר מיכל [מזלאטשאב] ז"ל

What is teshuvah, as it is stated (Shabbos 153a), “A person should be all his days in teshuvah”? After all, teshuvah is only one mitzvah among the 613 mitzvos!

מהי תשובה דאיתא (שבת קנ"ג, א) שיהיה כל ימיו בתשובה? הלא תשובה היא רק מצוה אחת מתרי"ג מצוות!

Rather, the matter is that teshuvah is an acronym: ת – “You shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d” (Devarim 18:13). ש – “I have set Hashem before me always” (Tehillim 16:8). ו – “You shall love your fellow as yourself” (Vayikra 19:18).

אלא הענין דתשובה הוא ראשי תבות: ת' תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך (דברים י"ח, ג). ש' שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד (תהלים ט"ז, ח). ו' ואהבת לרעך כמוך (ויקרא י"ט, י"ח).

ב – “In all your ways, know Him” (Mishlei 3:6). ה – “Walk humbly with your G-d” (Michah 6:8).

ב' בכל דרכיך דעהו (משלי ג, ו). ה' הצנע לקח עם. (אלקיך (מיקה ו, ח

[NOTE Summary

These teachings reveal three perspectives on teshuvah. First, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explained that today teshuvah for all sins is achieved through Torah study: if one should have brought a certain korban, he now studies the Torah portion of that korban. Second, Rabbi Raphael emphasized that the essence of teshuvah is simply an increase in Torah; without this, teshuvah does not truly begin. Third, Rabbi Mordechai, quoting Rabbi Velvel of Zbarizh in the name of Rabbi Michel of Zlotchov, explained the Gemara's statement that a person must be “all his days in teshuvah” by showing that the word teshuvah itself is an acronym. It embodies five fundamental principles: “You shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d” (Devarim 18:13), “I have set Hashem before me always” (Tehillim 16:8), “You shall love your fellow as yourself” (Vayikra 19:18), “In all your ways, know Him” (Mishlei 3:6), and “Walk humbly with your G-d” (Michah 6:8). These teachings together show that teshuvah is not only a single mitzvah but the foundation of one's entire life in Torah, mitzvos, and conduct.

Practical Takeaway

Teshuvah is not confined to fasting or regret alone—it is primarily about returning through Torah study, filling one's life with increased learning and awareness. By learning Torah, one atones; by increasing Torah, one begins the path of return; and by embodying the acronym of teshuvah, one integrates sincerity, awareness of Hashem, love for others, devotion in all daily acts, and humility. This makes teshuvah a lifelong orientation, not a momentary act.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה

Chassidic Story

It is told that Rabbi Michel of Zlotchov would sometimes rise in the middle of the night and begin reciting aloud, “Tamim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha, Shivisi Hashem lenegdi tamid...” going through each verse of the acronym of teshuvah. His students asked why he repeated these pesukim so often, and he replied: “Because this is teshuvah itself—not once a year, but every day of life.” His persistence in weaving Torah, humility, and love of others into daily practice reflected the teaching that one must be in teshuvah all his days. (Source: *Maggidei Emes*, p. 152) **END NOTE]**

Siman # 511

The Rabbi, of blessed memory, did not want to give teshuvah to those who came to him to receive a path of repentance.

And he said: After the teshuvah they become more wicked, for at first their sin was always before them, but afterwards they think that they have already completed their purification.

הרב ז"ל לא רצה ליתן תשובה לבאים אליו למבל תשובה.

ואמר, שאחר התשובה הם נעשים יותר רשעים, כי בתחלה היתה חטאתם נגדם תמיד, ואחר כך חושבין שכבר גמרו טהרתן.

[NOTE Summary

This teaching warns against the danger of false completion in teshuvah. The Rabbi taught that when people come to him asking for a “ready-made” teshuvah, it can leave them worse off. Beforehand, their sin weighed on them and pushed them toward humility and return. But once they felt they had “finished” their teshuvah, they believed themselves purified and no longer guarded against sin. Real teshuvah is never something finished—it must be lived continuously.

Practical Takeaway

Do not look for shortcuts or finality in teshuvah. Feeling the weight of one’s mistakes can itself be the engine that draws a person closer to Hashem. The moment one assumes “I am clean, I am finished,” the process stops and pride sets in. True teshuvah is ongoing: a life of humility, Torah study, and constant return. **END NOTE]**

Siman # 512

One time he said upon returning from the road, and I did not recall in whose name: Seemingly, what use is there that people are spoken to with words of mussar, and afterwards they conduct themselves as at first, not changing?

But the parable is to a king’s son who fell into captivity, and the king longed greatly for his son. If it is possible to take the king’s son out entirely from captivity, certainly this is very good.

פעם אחת אמר בבואו מהדרך, ולא זכרתי בשם מי. לכאורה מה מועילים בזה שמדברים לבני אדם מוסר, ואחר כך הם נוהגים כבראשונה שלא

אבל המשל לבן מלך שנפל בשביה, והמלך השתוקק על בנו מאד. אם באפשר להוציא את בן המלך לגמרי מהשביה, בודאי מה טוב מאד.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה

And if it is not possible for this, if he can take him out at least for one day or for one hour to show him before the king, even though afterwards he must return to captivity—nonetheless that one hour is also precious before the king, that he sees his son at least for that one hour.

So too, the application: when it is not possible to return in teshuvah completely, at least to bring in thoughts of teshuvah even for one hour is also good.

[NOTE Summary

This parable teaches that even temporary or partial teshuvah has great value. One might question the benefit of inspiring people with words of mussar if they soon return to their old ways. The answer is likened to a king whose son is taken captive. If the son could be freed entirely, nothing would be greater. But even if he can be released for just one day or one hour to appear before the king, that short time is still deeply precious to the father. Similarly, even if a person cannot sustain complete repentance, a single hour of heartfelt teshuvah is beloved before Hashem.

Practical Takeaway

Never dismiss small moments of return. Even if one cannot yet maintain full change, every sincere hour or even moment of teshuvah is cherished by Hashem. These brief windows of connection are powerful and meaningful, carrying eternal value. Instead of despairing over not sustaining constant perfection, one should treasure and build upon each small return.

END NOTE]

ואם אין באפשר בך, אם יוכל להוציאו לכל הפחות על יום אחד או על שעה אחת להראותו לפני המלך, אף שאחר כך מרח לשוב אל השביה, מכל מקום אותה שעה גם כן חביבה לפני המלך שרואה את בנו על כל פנים שעה אחת.

כך הנמשל, כשאי אפשר לחזור בתשובה לגמרי, על כל פנים שמכניסים הרהורי תשובה על שעה אחת גם כן טוב.

Siman # 513

From our teacher Rabbi Raphael, of blessed memory: The Rambam, of blessed memory, wrote in Hilchos Teshuvah (7:3): Do not say that teshuvah applies only to things that involve action, such as theft, forbidden relations, or robbery. Rather, just as one must repent from these, so too must he search within himself—

for bad traits that he has, such as anger, etc. The novelty is that although the Rambam did not see the Zohar (103b and further), which is strict concerning anger, nevertheless he lists it first, and also envy, hatred, mocking, frivolity, pursuit of money and honor, indulgence in foods, and the like.

ממוהר"ר רפאל ז"ל: הרמב"ם ז"ל כתב בהלכות תשובה (ז, ג): אל תאמר שאין תשובה אלא מדבר שיש בו מעשה, כגון גזל ועריות וגניבה, אלא כשם שצריך לשוב מאלו כך צריך לחפש מוז מאן זיבען

בדעות רעות שיש לו, כגון כעס וכו'. והחדוש אף שהרמב"ם לא ראה הזהר (ק"ג קפ"ו, ב ועילף) איך מחמיר בכעס, מכל מקום מונה אותו בראשונה, והקנאה והאיבה והיתול וליצנות ורדיפת הפמון והכבוד ורדיפת המאכלים וכיוצא בהם.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה

And from these one must repent even more than from things that involve action, for once a person sinks into them, it is harder to separate from them. And the Shelah (Maseches Yoma, end of... inyan) wrote: and so with a thousand others. And he concludes: therefore every person, like me today, is fitting to return in teshuvah, and all his days in teshuvah. In some sefarim it is written "like us" in plural, and in some printings "like me" in singular.

And the meaning (as a continuation of the previous matter above) is that one should not hate any Jew. And they told me in his name that he said: It is better to forgo several mitzvot so that there should not be any division of heart against any Jew.

And he would judge favorably all the wicked, saying that their wickedness was because of the overpowering of their nature, but not in essence. And he would explain logically how one should be humble before them: for one man told me that between one sin and the next there were three years, and in those years how his heart burned within him with the evil inclination, and he broke his heart and subdued the inclination that burned like fire within him.

But within those three years how much subjugation of the inclination he had! And this is a greater service to the Holy One, blessed be He, when the evil inclination is subdued (Zohar, III:128a). And we do not feel such subjugation of the inclination within ourselves, for our inclination, Heaven forbid, does not burn within us so strongly. Therefore how can we not be humbled before him?

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, through the words transmitted by Rabbi Raphael and other students, revealed that teshuvah is far deeper than refraining from sins of action. The Rambam already taught that one must repent not only from deeds like theft or forbidden relations but also from destructive traits such as anger, envy, hatred, frivolity, pursuit of money, honor, or indulgence. These are often harder to uproot because they cling to a person's character. The Shelah added that because such tendencies are so numerous, every person is obligated to live his entire life in a state of teshuvah. Rabbi Raphael explained further that the essence of teshuvah is repairing the heart's stance toward others: to avoid hatred of any Jew, to forgo even mitzvot if necessary to

ויותר צריך לשוב מאלו, מדבר שיש בו מעשה, שמאחר שנשקע בהם קשה לפרוש מהם. ושל"ה (מסכת יומא ד"ס וסנ"ס י"ש) כתב: וכיוצא בהם אלה. ומסיים: לכן כל אדם כמוני היום ראוי לחזור בתשובה וכל ימיו בתשובה. ובקצת ספרים "כמונו" בן"ו, ובקצת דפוסים "כמוני" ביו"ד לשון יחיד על עצמו.

והאיקה (המשך לסון סרמכ"ס דעילא) היינו שלא לשנוא שום בר ישראל. ואמרו לי משמו שאמר: מוטב להנחית כמה מצוות בכדי שלא יהיה שום פירוד הלב על שום בר ישראל.

והיה מלמד וכות על כל הרשעים, שהרשעות שלהם היא מחמת התגברות הטבע, אבל לא בעצם. והיה מסביר בשכל האידה להיות נגדם שפל: כי אדם אחד אמר לי שמעבירה אחת עד עבירה ב' היו ג' שנים, ובאותן ג' שנים כמה היה בוער לבו בקרבו היצר, ושבר לבו והכניע את היצר שהיה בוער באש בקרבו, רק אחר ג' שנים נכשל.

אבל בתוך ג' שנים כמה כפיית היצר היה לו! ודא פולחנא דקודשא בריך הוא יתיר, כד יצר הרע אתכפיא (זהר ח"ג קכ"ח, א). ואנחנו אין מרגישין בעצמנו כפיית היצר כזה בעוונותינו, כי אין ח"ו היצר בוער בקרבנו כל כך. על כן איד לא ושבר נהיה שפל כנגדו.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

עשרת ימי תשובה

prevent division, and to see even the wicked with compassion. He judged favorably, teaching that what looks like sin might hide years of struggle, where a person subdued fiery temptation before finally faltering. This, he explained, is even more precious before Hashem—the subjugation of the evil inclination itself is a greater service than external deeds.

Practical Takeaway

Teshuvah is not a single act or moment, nor only about obvious sins. It is a lifelong process of refining inner traits, softening the heart, and walking humbly with others. Real teshuvah demands compassion and humility, recognizing the unseen battles of others and choosing unity over division. When one feels superior to another Jew, he must remember that hidden within that person may be years of inner struggle against fiery temptation—struggles that Hashem treasures. This awareness leads us to humility, patience, and a deeper, truer teshuvah.

Chassidic Story

It is told that Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once rebuked his students for mocking a sinner in town. He said: “Do you know how many years of fire he withstood before he stumbled? Perhaps his inner battle was greater than yours, for you do not feel such fire at all.” The students were shaken and learned that teshuvah is not measured only by deeds but by the weight of inner struggle. (Source: *Imrei Pinchas HaShalem*, vol. 1, p. 214) **END**

NOTE]