

L'Shana Tova Everyone. Teshuvah - repentance is a wonderful gift from Hashem. It is like declaring bankruptcy, just about all debts are wiped out. Except that Hashem, barring certain exceptions, will accept Teshuvah from a Jew anytime and many times, without limitation. As Rosh Hashana approaches it is time to do Teshuvah! The Rambam tells us that although Teshuvah is accepted by Hashem all year around, these days of the calendar are special times when Hashem is even more willing to accept the penitence. What is Teshuvah? Confessing before Hashem one's wrongdoings, promising not to "do it again," and having regret about past misdeeds.

The following amazing true story illustrates the incredible power of Teshuvah to reunite Hashem and His people Yisroel:

A secular Israeli man and his family were once sent on business to live and work in New York for one year. One Sunday afternoon soon after their arrival in America, the family took a day trip in the mountains. The weather changed very suddenly and the family found themselves in a torrential rain-storm. Unfamiliar with the foreign roads, the father lost control of the family station wagon causing it to sail over a cliff, crashing below.

The parents, who were not wearing their seatbelts, were thrown out of the car and knocked unconscious. After a few minutes, the mother regained consciousness and heard her three small children calling to her from the car. Her husband lay motionless nearby on the ground. The first priority of the mother was to rescue the children in the car which lay precariously perched on another cliff.

The mother, who was in great pain, managed to remove carefully two of the children. However, her third child was trapped in an infant seat, beyond her reach. The mother tried the back door but it was smashed and would not open. The mother tried unsuccessfully to reach over the seat to the third child. Still, the mother just could not reach that far over the seats. The baby sat several feet out of reach. Desperate to save her child, the mother tried reaching out to her baby one more time. Miraculously, the mother was able to take the child into her arms. She knew that she could not possibly have reached that far, but the little girl was safely in her arms!

The mother went through numerous plastic surgeries during her three month stay in the hospital and the children all made full recoveries. The father unfortunately returned his soul to its maker at the scene of the accident. During her stay in the hospital, the mother kept thinking back to how her third child was saved. It was simply physically impossible to have done what she did to reach so far. It had to be a miracle which allowed her to reach her child; there was no way on earth that she could have done it alone. The mother came to believe in Hashem and decided to change her life and return to traditional Jewish observance.

Once home in Eretz Yisroel, the mother enrolled her two older children in religious schools. Because they had previously attended secular schools, the young children were behind their classmates in their religious studies. The ten-year-old Ami was especially frustrated in his Gemara class. He wanted to succeed, but it was very difficult for Ami to catch up. Several months into the school year, the ten-year-old Ami came home from school in tears.

The class was soon to take a comprehensive exam on the fifth chapter of Bava Kama. The boy had little hope of passing the exam. The mother reassured her young son that his teacher would understand, owing to the fact that Ami was just beginning his Gemara studies. The boy felt a little better, but he went to sleep still worried about the exam. In the morning, the boy woke up overjoyed. The mother was relieved to see that her son was happy, and she asked him if he had a restful night's sleep.

"Oh, I had a wonderful dream," said the boy "And I know I will do well on the test." The boy proceeded to tell his mother about the dream: I dreamt of Abba. We were walking down the street and I said to him: Abba, do you know that we are now baaley-teshuva?" And Abba said to me: 'Yes, I know. The day all of you become religious, I was permitted to enter Gan Eden.'"

The boy continued to relate the dream to his mother: "Then I told Abba that I was now learning Gemara and I was going to have a big test. Abba said, 'The section of Gemara you are learning in yeshiva is same section of Gemara they are teaching me in Gan Eden.' Abba then proceeded to teach me everything I need to know about the fifth chapter of Bava Kama." Ami received a score of 100% on the exam.(Rabbi P.J.Krohn, The Maggid Speaks p.203-205) Hashem is waiting for us today. Let us return to Him and be friends again. **L'Shana Tova Everyone.**