

BITACHON WEEKLY

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פרשת חקת תשפ"ד

The Baal Teshuva with The Worst Past Deserves a Self-Image of Greatness

EVEN IF YOU ARE STILL ON THE WAY, YOU ARE ALREADY A TZADDIK

The *Ma'aseh Parah Aduma* is: מטמא את הטהורים purifies those who were *Tamei*, and is: מְטַמָּא אֶת הַטְהוּרִים those who were *Tahor*. We can suggest that since *Parah Aduma* symbolizes purification from sin, so becoming *Tahor* is a: בְּהִיָּה form of becoming a *Baal Teshuva*, and: בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבִּעְלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִים אֵין צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים יכולין לעמוד במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים אין צדיקים גמורים יכולין לעמוד *Baalei Teshuva* are even GREATER than pure *Tzaddikim!* So “Mr. Sinner” becomes the big pure *Tzaddik*, and the *Tzaddik Gamur* is *Tamei* compared to him, since he can't even stand in his: מְקוֹם lofty place!

Imagine! The *Rambam* in *Hilchos Teshuva* elaborates about the greatness of a *Baal Teshuva*, since the *Baal Teshuva* doesn't feel so great, despite his

Teshuva. But the Torah way of thinking is not like our negative way of thinking.

לא מהשבותי My thoughts are different than yours. ישעיה נה ח דרכיה דרכי נעם משלי ג יז The ways of the *Torah* are sweet. Imagine Mr. Zero is actually looking down at all those: קדש מרחם holy-from-birth'niks, who spent their lives in *Torah* and never tasted sin!

The bum becomes the *Tzaddik*, and the *Tzaddik* is *Tamei* compared to him! Look at how much needless depression we all suffer from, since we don't truly believe in the words of *Chazal*. You would need a good half hour of reviewing, that:

בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁבִּעְלֵי תְּשׁוּבָה עוֹמְדִים אֵין צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים יכולין לעמוד *Baalei Teshuva* are even GREATER than pure *Tzaddikim!* No wonder the *Baalei Mussar* were such happy people! They internalized what we all know but don't really feel.

ידעת היום והשבת אל לבבך ואתחנן ד לט The knowledge in your “mind” needs to penetrate into your “heart”.

“But I'm not a real *Baal Teshuva*; I'm just **trying** to be one!” Notice that the *Cohen* who is: יזרק throws the blood of the *Parah* has to be standing OUTSIDE the *Machaneh!* The sinner doesn't belong in the *Ohel Moed*; but his *Ma'ala* is that he's **aiming** the blood towards the *Kodesh HaKodoshim*. [Divrei Chaim]. **And wherever you are “aiming” for and “striving” to be, THAT'S where you really are!**

Notice that *Elozor* who is the *S'gan* [“second” in command to the] *Cohen Gadol* performs the *Avoda* of *Parah Aduma*. Perhaps the *Torah* is again being *M'ramez*, that the person who is **on the way** to greatness is “the man of the hour”. The *S'gan* is the future *Cohen Gadol*. Even if you're sitting all day in pain over your sins that are so difficult to overcome, you are already “*Der Ganzer Knocker!*”

This positive way of thinking is so different than our depressive *Hashkafos*. Your *Yetzer Hara* is lying to you throughout your life, and is causing you to play down your true greatness. And if someone calls you a *Tzaddik*, you say: “Stop the *Chanufa* [empty flattery]!” We would all be dancing 24/7 if we would live with the truth!

Self-Bashing Is Poison!

I know *Chashuva Yidden* who if they hear the slightest hint of *Lashon Hara*, they go wild and shut you down immediately. They are actually justified, since *Lashon Hara* is truly poison. There are many of us who habitually are always telling themselves negative self-talk. “I did this wrong, and that wrong”. “I'm no good”. “I'm not with it”. “Not frum enough/ or nice enough. “My smile is no good”! There is no end to this!

If *Lashon Hara* about others is evil, and thinking negative thoughts about others is a bad *Midda*, surely we need to remember to guard ourselves from those negative self-talk thoughts, with as much vigilance as *Lashon Hara*, and scream to yourself: “No more self-bashing, it's poison!” Your life comes first!

When you work on this and do plenty *Pratim*, it is very exciting; and your trapped true-self comes out and you blossom! Of course, the main thing is to daven for success in your *Avoda*, and consult with *Baalei Mussar* who have experience with this.

They say in the name of R' Yisroel Salanter *Zatzal*, that during *Elul*, the main thing is to be like a person shoveling the snow of his walkway, and as long as you're heading in the right direction. "But I did such terrible sins!" Indeed, the *Parah Aduma* has to be red, and red symbolizes sin. And it must be: תמימה באדמימות **total** redness - a *Gantzer Rasha* - the worst of the worst!

And: אָפּוּר לאַ עֵלָה עֵלְיָהּ עַל *Bli'ya'al* is the famous term used in *Tanach* to describe the worst *Reshaim*, which means: בְּלִי עוֹל without a yoke, meaning: עוֹל בְּלִי עוֹל שָׁמַיִם without the yoke of Heaven. Imagine someone who is always making mistakes, and saying the wrong things. No *Kavana* in *Tefila*, not enough learning *Torah*, and all kinds of *Bain Adam La'chaveiro* issues, like *Kin'ah*, *Ta'ava*, and *Kavod* all over the place! No yoke!

Guess what! You're exactly what we're looking for in a *Parah Aduma*! And the *Meforshim* ask: Why a cow? Because a cow has lots of: גִּשּׁוּם physicality - a thick, fat piece of: מוֹמָר mass and *Gashmiyus* (PS. is that your self-image?) And why do we use a [female] cow and not a [male] ox? Because the red, disgusting, *Treife* blood of a [female] cow, turns into beautiful, creamy, rich, white milk!

Look how Hashem made His world to be *M'ramez* so much *Chizuk* for His beloved human-being. חֲבִיב אָדָם How precious is Man, who was created in the image of Hashem! How much *Chizuk* we get from the miracle of the automatic production of milk! And this is how Hashem wants a *Baal Teshuva* to feel!

Novardok

Novardokers talked about: תַּתָּח tension. When certain people make you tense, it means you have a *Kavod* issue. They scare you, because you don't have much poise in their presence. *Novardokers* would *Davka* hang around those scary people, to overcome their: תַּתָּח tension and their fear.

They would *Davka* stick around, and they would learn not to view humans as gods [which is a form of *Avoda Zara*!]. You're dancing at a *Chasuna*, and you are afraid to stretch out your hand inviting someone into the circle, since he may reject your offer and leave your hand hanging. You interpret this a *Bizayon*, but it isn't. If you are working on the *Midda* of: הַשְׁתַּוּת *Hish'tavus*, meaning you don't care (it is "equal" to you) if people love or hate you, then you will actually **look** for such opportunities!

It will turn you into steel, and you'll learn to stop being sensitive. *Chaim* is speaking to three people, and you are one of them. He focuses on the other two, and he ignores you. People dislike being overlooked. But if you're a *Novardoker* working on: הַשְׁתַּוּת *Hish'tavus*, you'll love it. You get stronger if you report your "*Prat*" to your *Rosh HaVaad*. So-and-so is not as warm to you as he used to be, and for no reason, except that he isn't so impressed with you like he used to be. This can hurt an ordinary person. But a *Novardoker* would "kvell" glow with *Simcha*. **"I have one Friend in Shamayim, and I don't need the whole world worshipping me!"**

Learning *Shaar Yichud HaMaaseh* of *Chovos Halvavos* (the first few *Perakim*) helps *Gevaldig*. He tells you that all those people in your life should be in your eyes like trees and animals! So, what, if you looked awkward in the presence of so-and-so? He is merely grass or a cat! You keep saying: הַכְּבוֹד הַבְּלִי הַבְּלִי *Kavod* is just fluffy air. [*Mesilas Yesharim*]. Or: מִן הָעוֹלָם אֲבוֹת דָּכָא A person's desire for *Kin'ah*, *Ta'ava*, and *Kavod* take him out of the world and you feel great!

You disconnect from people, and you realize that there is only one: יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ אֶב הַרְחֵמֵן close Friend and loving Father in *Shamayim*. The people in your life are there for you to love, not to fear! The *Chovos Halvavos* says that not caring if people love you or hate you is *Tachlis HaChamudos*; i.e., the most desirable *Midda* in the universe. So it's worth working on!

It will make life more bearable and *Geshmak*. It gives you health and true *Bitachon* when you trust only Hashem, and don't rely on people and their approval. Don't be afraid of *Shtoltzy* people with personalities, or wealth, or fame, or all kinds of (even) *Ruchaniyus* qualities! You'd be shocked if you knew how insecure they really are. Give them love and warmth and respect. They'll appreciate it!