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**TAL wishes the community an easy and meaningful fast. May we all be written and sealed in The Book of Life.**

## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

**DIRECTOR  
TAL**



### A GIFT FROM G-D!

Simon moved up north and noticed that there was no supermarket in his area. He opened up a very popular store and within a few years was earning a staggering £20,000 a month. Business was great. He had a fantastic team of workers. One day his accountant had to urgently leave the country. His mother was unwell. He resigned and Simon quickly found a 'budding' accountant, Richard, to take over.

The business continued to flourish – so it seemed.

At the end of the year, Simon's friend approached him and told him, I don't know whether you are aware – but you are in a major loss for the year.

Simon was shocked.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, either someone's taking produce from the inside, or it's your new accountant."

Simon investigated through all the data and found out the problem lay square with the accountant.

As the accountant, he had an easy hand on signing cheques. Every time supply came in and he needed to return VAT he added a further 20% on top of the amount needed to return to the supplier. In effect he was throwing away the business. Of course, none of the suppliers complained at their extra share and the company was now in a heavy loss.

Simon called in the accountant.

Do you know what you have done?

"No sir."

Simon proceeded to explain the situation, he was furious.

"You are giving away our hard earned money; you have lost £100,000. You owe it to me and I want it back."

Richard was lost for words. He had no idea.

Simon raised his voice – "So what are you going to do about it?"

"I am truly sorry".

"That's not enough; you should mortgage your house and pay back the money you lost." Simon insisted.

"Oh, I don't own my house, I just about get by the wage you give me in order to feed my eight children. I wish I could help, I am so sorry." replied Richard.

Simon was lost for words. Again he repeated "So what are you going to do about it?"

Again the answer was sorry.

Now Simon lost his temper; "Get out your fired!" ▶

## > UPCOMING EVENTS

9th OCTOBER

**SUKKOT LUNCH @ CANARY WHARF**

(see more info online)

”

## THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"It's not what I have been through in my life that defines who I am, it's how I got through it that has made me the person I am today."



**DVAR TORAH**

A gift from G-D!

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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Richard already shocked began to cry, pleading with his boss, “please, it’s before Rosh Hashanah, you can’t leave a family of eight children without food. Please it won’t happen again, I am truly sorry.”

The cries reached Simons heart and he gave him one more chance.

The next year, Simon came back to overlook at the progress.

This time he was even more shocked. The business had suffered a worse triple digit loss.

What happened?

He investigated and found out that the Richard was again at fault.

He brought him in and asked him to explain the loss.

Richard burst out crying, I am so sorry, I will make sure it won’t happen again.

At this stage imagine you are Simon – what would you do?

Let us turn for a moment to the prophet Yechezkel.

Yechezkel the prophet was exiled to Babylon 11 years before the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash.

Yechezkel described the frightening extent of the people’s social and political demoralization which threatened to spread over the land of the exiled.

He devoted his energy to the nation repenting (Teshuva) and being dedicated to Hashem in exile.

At one stage he is faced by the people who tell him that Teshuva will not help.

They see no point to Teshuva. They don’t seem to understand how it is possible to gain atonement after all their sins.

Yechezkel (33:11) responds with an oath from G-d: “I swear, says Hashem, that rather than wanting to have the sinner die because of his sins, I want him to repent from his bad ways and live.”

It seems now that G-d has made a promise the people comprehend that Teshuva is possible.

What happened here? Why the need to promise and how come now they understand?

If we find that Hashem makes a statement and swears to its veracity, you can be sure that it would otherwise be impossible to believe.

The people understood the depths of corruption caused by sin; they could not possibly see how Teshuva could change that. They had sinned constantly and although they were ready to repent, they didn’t understand how repentance would work.

Thus Hashem swears and tells them that it CAN work.

The concept of Teshuva is not normal, if we break an expensive ancient plate, we will never be able to renew it.

Hashem has granted us a Neshamah (soul). Sometimes we injure the soul through our sins. Is there a way out? Can we fix it? Surely it’s beyond repair.

No! Hashem SWEARS – there IS a way back – Teshuva.

When Hashem says something of course we believe. When He swears, it’s because He understands that it is very difficult for us to believe. Nevertheless He swears to encourage us that it’s possible.

A similar idea is mentioned in the Yerushalmi Makot (2:5): Wisdom was asked, “What is the proper punishment for a sinning soul?” Wisdom responded, (Mishlei 13:21), that sinners will suffer from their sins. There is no way out. Prophecy was asked the same question and answered, (Yechezkel 18:4) a sinning soul must die. Hashem was asked and He responded, “Let the soul repent and it will be atoned (Tehillim 25:8).

According to logic a sinner should suffer, there should be no way out. Once we have made the boss lose over and over again, how can the boss still employ us?

It doesn’t make sense.

It is only through G-d’s Kindness that he has blessed us with a beautiful gift of Teshuva that Hashem allows us to wipe away all the sins and start again.

It’s not easy – it requires effort, but with the right introspection and repentance we get to start on a new leaf.

One of the greatest present a person can have is the opportunity to renew, to wipe away any minuses and start again.

Hashem’s Hands are always open to us throughout the year, yet on Yom Kippur Hashem exhibits a special closeness to us. He approaches us like a father. No matter how far a son is, the father always exhibits love for his son. The father yearns for his sons return. We pray – Avinu Malkenu – our Father our King – help us come back.

Hashem grants us this special day, a time when He approaches us and awaits for us to return to him.

Let us take advantage of this great present, concentrate on at least one aspect of remorse and willingness to improve.

Its hard work, but we don’t want to miss out on this fantastic present and opportunity.

G-d has faith in us, He loves us, let’s reply and show Him we are his Children.

***Tizku Leshanim Rabot Tovot VeNeimot. ■***

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**RABBI MASHIACH KELATY - RABBI OF STANMORE SEPHARDI KHEILLA**

## THE ELEPHANT AND THE IVORY TOWER

Elephants are pretty powerful creatures. They can weigh as much as 12 tons, and stand as high as thirteen feet tall. Their trunks are strong enough to rip branches off a tree.

But despite their enormous power, elephants can be chained.

Chaining an elephant isn't as simple as just putting a chain around its leg – an adult elephant would snap the chain without effort. Which chain is strong enough to hold an elephant who struggles to break it?

For the answer to that question, we have to take a trip back to the time when the elephant is born. A small chain fastened to a metal collar around the elephant's foot is attached to a wooden peg nailed into the ground. The baby elephant will struggle, but eventually realises that it can't break the chain, and worse still, continuing to struggle creates a painful burn on its leg. The baby elephant learns not to struggle – it accepts that the limit imposed by the chain is permanent, and there is no use struggling against it.

Sure, the elephant grows up, and becomes the most powerful land mammal on the face of the earth. But the chains in its mind remain, and so the chains on its leg are never broken. The proverbial "Ivory Tower".

Now, this might be fine when applied to an elephant. After all, who would want 12 tons of angry blubber running around in the jungle, saying "Ok, who's the wise guy who tried to tie me up?"

But I heard a beautiful insight by Rav Fischel Schachter. How often do we Jews act like the elephant? So very often, there is a test that we fail to pass, an addiction we fail to beat, a relationship

that we cannot tolerate. And the conclusion is always the same:

**I JUST CAN'T!**

*Teshuvah* can only begin if I do not give up on myself. If I believe that I am totally worthless, then I cannot begin to think about repentance. Then I am no better off than that baby elephant who started off life with the chain. If only it realised the power it has as a fully grown adult, to smash the chain with one blow. But it is conditioned from birth not to believe in its own potential.

**IF ONLY WE REALISED OUR POTENTIAL AND VALUE, AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF HASHEM!!**

The *Mishna* states "Don't be wicked in your own eyes" [Avot 2:13] In order for a person to begin the process of *Teshuvah*, he must first realize that he is somebody of value. He must take note: I am a son of Israel. I have a King in Heaven. I am a servant of the King. Yes, I may not have been a very good servant, but at least I can say that I am His servant.

The realization that there is a King and that I am His servant, and therefore that I have self worth, is a prerequisite for the process of Repentance.

Being a Jew entails the combination of two factors: Pride and responsibility.

It is essential that we ignite within ourselves the innate sense that we are proud children of *Hashem*. And it is equally essential that we take responsibility for being His children, and give Him the honour due to Him in this world.

Just as important as it is to believe in *Hashem*, one must realise that *Hashem* believes in us. ■

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**RABBI AVRAHAM BLICKSTEIN** - ROSH CHABURA IN DARCHEI HORA'A LERABBANIM, YERUSHALAYIM

## YOM HAKIPPURIM – SPIRITUAL PURITY

The sefer Ohr Gedalya writes that the *pasuk*, when discussing the atonement of Yom Kippur, mentions the words “*kapara*” - atonement, and “*tahara*” – purification. When a person sins, he not only deserves punishment, but his soul is tainted by the effects of the sin. The Mishnah teaches that one sin leads to another sin, and an understanding of this is that after sinning, the soul is tainted to the extent that the person finds it easier to sin again. “*Kapara*” is therefore the process through which the punishment that is due the sinner is removed, and “*tahara*” is the complete removal of the spiritual tainting, leaving the repenter as clean as before he sinned.

How does one achieve this? A fundamental part of *teshuva* is to be so embarrassed by one's transgression that one feels that there is no place in the world for him to hide. When a person sins, he directly disobeys the commandments of the King of the world and true repentance is the embarrassment one feels when one fully appreciates this. In fact, the letters of the word “*shuva*” – repent, are the same as the word “*busha*” – embarrassment.

But this alone does not suffice for a complete cleansing. The *Mishnah* teaches that the *Bnei Yisrael* are fortunate because they achieve cleansing through the hands of *Hashem* Himself, like a *mikveh* purifies a person. What can be understood by the analogy of the *mikveh*?

The sefer *Hachinuch* writes that when being purified in a *mikveh*, one submerges oneself under the water as if the entire world did not exist, for before the creation of the world we are taught that the universe was full of water. When a person emerges, he is completely new again. Similarly, true repentance whereby that the repenter is a new entity without any of the original blemishes, can only be achieved with Divine assistance. It is incumbent upon the person to repent, and when he does, he merits that *Hashem* Himself wipes the slate clean, as if nothing had been there before!

How does *teshuva* cause this to happen? One may suggest that *teshuva* works *midda k'negged midda* – merit for merit. As mentioned above, *teshuva* is achieved through embarrassment to such a degree that one does not feel one has a place in this world. Consequently, his wish is so-to-speak granted, and *Hashem* “takes him away” from this world and the entity that he was before, bringing him back as a new entity. Like the sefer *Hachinuch's* understanding of the person who immerses in the *mikveh*, this new person is entirely clean of all the tainting and blemishes that he had before!

May our sincere *teshuva* bring about both a “*kapara*” and a “*tahara*”! ■

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RABBI DOV LEVENE

## VIDUI OVERVIEW

Yom Kippur is the highlight of the *Aseret Yimei Teshuva*, the ten days of repentance. How can we tap in to the special mercy of this day? There is a natural atonement in the day itself as the possuk says **כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם**.

Why then do we spend the day in prayer, confessing our sins? This is for the higher levels of sins that require Teshuva (repentance), partially achieved through the Vidui (confessions) that we do most of the day.

When reciting the *Vidui*, we strike our chests saying how we sinned. Yet, we come across sins in the Vidui that we know we have definitely not transgressed! Why then do we not simply omit these sins that are not relevant to us? The *Rambam* was asked this and answered that we do not appreciate the depth of judgment. Each sin has multiple levels. This can range from merely thinking about it to actually doing it, with many levels, and facets of levels, in between. This being the case we almost certainly have transgressed every sin on some level! (*Likutim on Pirkei Avos 2:8*)

We start off with the *Ashamnu* that uses words that start with the twenty-two letters of the *Aleph-Beit*. Using all twenty-two letters expresses the fact that we recognize that our sins encompass everything. The *Ashamnu* is a more general confession of sins.

After this comes the *Al Cheit Shechatanu*. This phrase precedes each item on a long list of specific sins. What lies behind these introductory words?

There are three parts to introduce each sin. *Al Cheit* comes to show that we recognise the sin itself and all the evil that comes with it. *Shechatanu* comes to say that we recognise we were the ones that did wrong and it was due to our lowliness listening to our evil inclination. *Lefanecha* means we recognise the gravity of the sin done before *Hashem*, the King of Kings. Then we go on to detail the specific sin.

Who are we trying to fool by saying that we are sorry when we then find ourselves sinning again after Yom Kippur? The answer is that it depends on our intentions whilst confessing. Someone who repents sincerely but later stumbles, is considered as having indeed repented but that afterwards the evil inclination got the better of him. This means that after repenting sincerely, a new calculation of sins begins, which is not linked to previous sins removed through Teshuva. (*Mabit, Shaar HaTeshuva Chapter 6*)

May we all be signed in the Book of Life with all good decrees for ourselves and the whole Jewish nation and merit that this year will see the coming of Moshiach. ■



## OUR CHACHAMIM

**RABBI CHAIM DAVID BERNHARD OF PIOTRKOW**  
REBBE AND PHYSICIAN

In his youth, Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard was very far from Judaism, living his life much like a Polish nobleman. In fact he was the personal physician of King Wilhelm II of Prussia, and everyone knew him as Doctor Bernhard.

On account of a medical miracle that he witnessed, however, Doctor Bernhard did teshuvah. One of his patients, who suffered from an incurable disease (which the physicians of the time deemed fatal), went to see the tzaddik Rabbi David of Lelov for a blessing, after which he completely recovered. When he returned to Doctor Bernhard, he examined him and was amazed to discover that he was in perfect health. He therefore decided to go and see this rabbi from Lelov for himself. Rabbi David spoke in private with the doctor for several hours, and at the end of their conversation he said to the doctor, “When you return to Judaism, you will bring happiness to your Father in Heaven.” In fact Doctor Bernhard became another man – Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard – for he was determined on completely returning to Hashem

When he came back home, he broke all his dishes and purchased new ones, becoming a G-d-fearing Jew. In fact he became such a chassid of Rabbi David of Lelov that he eventually became one of the tzaddikim of the generation, having many disciples of his own. Near the end of his life, the Rebbe of Radomsk, the Tiferet Shlomo, visited him and said: “The former days be void” (Numbers 6:12). To this Rabbi Chaim David replied, “When we do teshuvah out of love, deliberate sins are transformed into merits. Therefore even the ‘former days’ are mitzvot.” On Shevat 20, 5618, Rabbi Chaim David Bernhard departed from this world and was buried in the Piotrkow cemetery in Poland. ■



## HALACHOT

**RABBI ELI MANSOUR**

### IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO TAKE VITAMINS ON SHABBAT?

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 328) discusses the prohibition enacted by the Rabbis forbidding taking medication on Shabbat under certain circumstances. The Rabbis enacted this measure out of concern that one might grind herbs on Shabbat to produce medication, in violation of the prohibition against grinding on Shabbat. It should be recalled that in Talmudic times, medications were not purchased in capsule or tablet form as they are today; each patient would produce his own medication by grinding herbs. The Sages therefore forbade taking medication on Shabbat, as a safeguard against the prohibition of grinding.

May one eat on Shabbat regular foods, such as vegetables, for medicinal purposes? For example, if a physician tells a patient that partaking of certain foods will help alleviate his symptoms or recover from his illness, is it permissible for him to eat these foods on Shabbat?

Halacha establishes that foods normally eaten by healthy people were not included under the Rabbinic decree forbidding medication on Shabbat. Hence, one may eat any regular food on Shabbat even if he does solely for medicinal purposes.

Conversely, is it permissible for a perfectly healthy person to take medications on Shabbat?

The Beit Yosef (commentary on the Tur by Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch) establishes a rule that the prohibition against taking medications on Shabbat was from the outset applied only to those who are ill. Healthy people were never included under this prohibition, and thus a healthy person may take medication on Shabbat, even medications that are normally ingested only by sick patients.

This ruling of the Beit Yosef affects the question of taking vitamins on Shabbat. People take vitamins not to cure an illness, but rather to strengthen their body and help maintain good health. According to the Beit Yosef, a healthy person would be allowed to take vitamins on Shabbat, since the prohibition against taking medication applies only to those who are ill. Furthermore, today vitamins are considered food of healthy people, since many people who are healthy do take vitamins daily. This is indeed the ruling of several recent and contemporary authorities, including Chacham Ovadia Yosef, in his work Halichot Olam (vol. 4), Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Russia-New York, 1895-1986), in Iggerot Moshe, and Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul, Jerusalem, 1924-1998), in Or Le'tziyon.

Although Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Jerusalem, 1910-1995) disagreed, and forbade taking vitamins on Shabbat, in light of the rule established by the Beit Yosef and the position taken by the authorities mentioned earlier, it emerges that one may take vitamins on Shabbat.

**SUMMARY:** The Rabbis forbade taking medication under certain circumstances on Shabbat. Ordinary food, however, may be eaten even for purely medicinal purposes, and a healthy person may take medications such as vitamins on Shabbat. ■



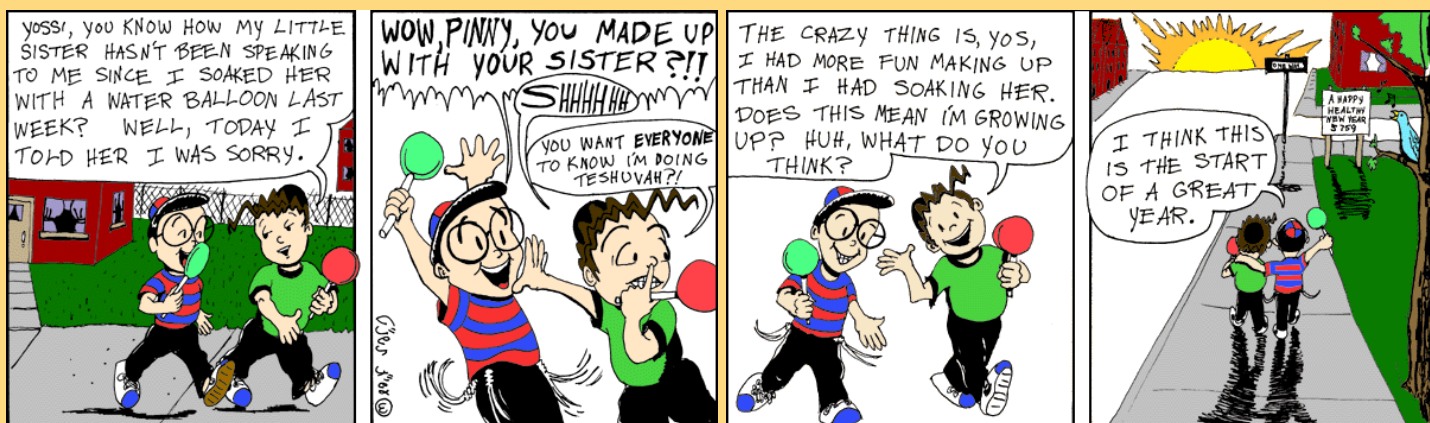
## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Passover commemorates the going out of Egypt. Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah. What historical event can Yom Kippur be said to commemorate?
- ❷ Who wrote the prayer “Unesaneh Tokef” said during the chazan’s repetition of musaf?
- ❸ Why do we read the book of Yona on Yom Kippur?
- ❹ In what two ways does havdalah after Yom Kippur differ from havdalah after Shabbos?
- ❺ Ideally, what mitzvah should one begin immediately after Yom Kippur?

### Answer

❶ Moshe came down from Mount Sinai on the tenth of Tishrei with the second set of Tablets, signifying forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. Yom Kippur can be said to commemorate this event, the first national day of forgiveness for the Jewish People. ❷ “Unesaneh Tokef” was written by Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, Germany about 1000 years ago. ❸ The repentance of the people of Nineveh serves as an inspiration to us to repent, and shows us that repentance can overturn a Divine decree. (Shelah Hakadosh) ❹ After Yom Kippur, the blessing over spices is omitted from havdalah. Also, the source of the flame used for havdalah after Yom Kippur must be a fire kindled before Yom Kippur. (Orach Chaim 624:3,4) ❺ Building the succa. (Rema, Orach Chaim 624:5)

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## THE CUSTOM OF KAPPAROT

Regarding the custom to perform the practice of kapparot on the day preceding Yom Kippur, which is to ritually slaughter a male chicken for all males and to recite verses over it, one should refrain from this custom. Rema: It is the custom to give the chickens to the poor. (Shulchan Aruch 605:1)

The Beit Yosef writes that the Ramban and Rashba forbid the practice of this custom because of *Idarkei Emori*, a prohibition against following idolatrous customs. The

Rema writes in his notes to this ruling that, nevertheless, this custom is recorded by the Geonim and many Rishonim and it has become an established custom that one should follow.

It is well known that Ashkenazic Jewry follow the rulings of the Rema, Rabbi Moshe Isserles, while Sefardim follow the Mechaber, Rabbi Yosef Karo. However, the Kaf Hachaim writes that in this case the Sefardim also practice the custom.

The reason is most likely because the Arizal was very careful to perform this custom, explaining its deep Kabbalistic reasons in *Sha'ar Hakavanot*.

If kapparot is in fact practiced with a chicken, it is the widespread custom to give it immediately to a poor family for eating before the Yom Kippur fast. If done with money instead, the money is given to the poor in order to buy food.





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A poster for 'YOM KIPPUR DRIVE' featuring a blue background with a collage of hands of various skin tones reaching towards the center. The text is in yellow and white. In the top right corner, there is a small white box with the text 'T'03'. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'Torah Action Life' with the letters 'TAL' in blue and pink.

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