

## Sefer Devarim

THE PENSON FAMILY EDITION

IN MEMORY OF MENDEL BEN MENDEL A"H

חודש אלול

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

### The Easy Road to Teshuva

Transcribed from tape #524

#### When There Is Cause for Fear

Dovid Hamelech said בימי רע למה אירא - "Of what should I be afraid in the days when there is what to fear? What should I be afraid of when there is cause to fear?" (Tehillim 49:6). So Dovid said that he's not afraid of the perils that confront him; he doesn't fear his enemies and those who seek to hurt him. So what is he afraid of? He fears only one thing: עון עקבי יסובני, "I'm in fear of my sins," says Dovid Hamelech.

At the time when Dovid was confronted by some danger, בימי רע, he was afraid that at that moment of peril, during the time of difficulty, that's when his sins would rise up and accuse him. They wait for the opportunity, like it states השטן מקטרג בשעת הסכנה - "When a man is in peril that's when the accuser brings up his accusations" (Tanchuma Vayigash). When you're already in trouble, that's when you're likely to be accused of your misdeeds in shamayim. Like the gemara says (Shabbos 32a): Nafal tura, when the ox falls, so everybody says: chadeid lasakina, let's sharpen the knife. It's not easy to get a big ox onto the ground. But once it falls, that's when it's most available for shechita; so they say "Sharpen the knife; now is the chance." And therefore, in the time of peril, when danger looms, that's when a man's iniquities rise up against him.

#### What Is the Sin of Heels?

However, you must pay attention to the words of Dovid, because he specified that it was a special kind of iniquity that he feared. Of course Dovid was afraid of any sin he might have done, but he was mostly in fear of a certain class of sins. In the time when it is necessary to be apprehensive, in the time when a man should have a certain sensation of fear, of what should he be afraid, of which sins? עון עקבי, "Of the sins under my heels," said Dovid.

עון עקבי יסובני - "The sins under my heels surround me." And this is explained in the gemara as follows: עונות שאדם דש בעקביו בעולם הזה מסובין לו ליום הדין - "It's the sins that a man tramples under his heels, they are the ones that rise up and surround him on the Day of Judgment" (Avodah Zara 18a). Which means, that when a man is cognizant of any wrongs that he did, when he is aware of his sins, so to a certain extent he is capable of confronting them. At least he has regret. Now, to have regret is already a step towards rectification. It's facing the direction of teshuva. To be sorry, it's at least it's a first step. It's a big thing to know that something wrong has been committed. Now, of course, the best thing is to get busy repairing the harm that you did, to change your ways. But at least when a man knows that he is guilty, and he has compunction, he has charata, his heart aches, he is worried, that is already a form of kapara. It's not a full selicha u'mechila, but it is certainly important.

#### Ambushed by The Heels

But what is there to worry about? Those sins that a man is not concerned about, that sins that he tramples on without thinking. He doesn't consider them important, or he may not even consider them as anything wrong. And then suddenly on the Day of Judgment he is confronted with enemies that he didn't expect. He has fingers pointed at him by opponents that he didn't know existed. Avon akayvav, the sins under his heels, m'subin lo, they rise up and surround him. They'll ambush him and he won't know what to say because he wasn't prepared for such a confrontation.

Now there are two kinds, two separate classes, of avon akayvei. There may be more, but for

convenience we'll make two classifications now. One is the things that people consider permissible, or if they don't consider permissible, at least they think that they're not serious. He knows it may not be right, but he imagines that it's not serious. We have to know, however, that even these, even if it would be true that his judgment was correct that they are lesser *aveiros*, even if they are at the bottom of the scale of severity, the most lenient of all kinds of sins, nevertheless there is no such thing as a small sin if a person doesn't have regrets. Without *teshuva* no sin is small. Every sin is a catastrophe if a person doesn't regret it.

### **It Must Be Taken Seriously**

It's like that famous *mashal* of a man trying to go to sleep in a bed and everything is comfortable. But there's one bean lying under the counterpane beneath him. Under the sheet there's a bean. It's only one bean, but it makes him uncomfortable and it ruins a night's sleep. It presses into his side. It pushes in this direction, and that direction. Unless he takes it out, he may not sleep at all that night. That's what you can look forward to from a small *aveirah*. It will make trouble for you to no end, like that small bean; unless you pull it out by doing *teshuva*. Like the Chovos Halevavos says: there's no *aveira* that is big with *teshuva*, and there is no *aveirah* that is small without *teshuva*! And therefore, these unsuspecting enemies are going to ambush a man on the Day of Judgment. From a corner that he didn't expect any kind of attack, suddenly there will come a very big attack.

Now, not only is it a serious matter for a person to overlook something in which he rebelled against Hashem - even if it's the smallest item, but he didn't have any attitude of regret, any feeling of sorrow that he had committed that act. Not only is there the gravity of the matter, but there's another consideration that Rabbeinu Yonah explains in *Shaarei Teshuva*. And he tells us the *mashal* from Yeshaya Hanavi. Yeshaya Hanavi says (Yeshaya 5:18) that people may start out with deeds that seem as unimportant as spider webs; **הוי מושכי העון בחבלי השוא**, they're thin, nothing to be worried about, you think, but eventually when they are added together

and they become twisted into one big cord, **וכעבות והעגלה חטאה**, the sins eventually becomes like the heavy ropes that you use to pull wagons.

And Rabbeinu Yonah tells us, a small *aveira* that's frequently repeated, in the course of time it become as serious as *chayvei krisus* and *chayvei misas beis din*. Even the smallest sin, if it's committed again and again, so its severity is added together, and eventually it becomes a very big sin. Almost like *chayvei krisus* and *chayvei misas beis din*! So we begin to understand that *avon akayvei*, the small sin under my heels, the sin that I'm not even thinking about, is something that should be taken seriously.

### **Easy Teshuva Is Pushed Off**

However, there's another classification of *avon akeivai*, something that causes people to overlook certain deeds - not because they don't think that they are sins or because they consider them small *aveiros*. But it's because these things are so easy to rectify. There are certain things that require almost no effort to avoid, and even if they were done, they are easily repaired. And because of the ease that's involved in these things, people disdain them.

You know, sometimes people are confronted with very important tests, with temptations that require a great deal of willpower to avoid - and sometimes it might even require a change in one's lifestyle. Sometimes you have to move to a different country to save your soul. And why not? There's no question that people move to save their health. If a man is told that for his health he has to leave a certain climate and settle elsewhere; even though it means giving up all of his friendships and his family, and giving up his professional practice. But what doesn't a man do to save his life? He moves, even if it's across the world, and he understands that it's worth it.

And so too, sometimes for certain *aveiros* it's necessary to make drastic changes in one's life. And certainly he should do it. He shouldn't hesitate because if a man can save his life, if he can still salvage and achieve something in this world, he must do it. Everything is worth the sacrifice to rescue the rest of your days, the remaining years that you have. Even elderly people move to other

countries in order to gain a few more years; surely they should do so to save their souls. And because this type of test looms so large in a man's eyes, he understands its importance, and he can often overcome it.

But when a sin is so easy to repair, when *teshuva* requires almost no effort, so it doesn't occur to him to do it now. He thinks that someday he'll get to it, later on; it's nothing to worry about. And he postpones and he neglects. And therefore, because he tramples on these things, they're going to arise on the Day of Judgment and confront him. And it is this second class that we're going to discuss now, the second class of *avon akeivai*, things that are so easy for a person to avoid, but nonetheless, he tramples them underfoot.

### **Teshuva Means to Come Closer to Hashem**

Now when talk about repenting or doing *teshuva*, let's not make an error. We're not talking merely about righting some wrongs that a person did. *Teshuva* in that sense is too limited. When we talk about *teshuva*, we talk about *v'shuvu el Hashem*, to return to Hashem. Which means, not merely to repent for things that were done incorrectly. What *teshuva* really means is to come to Hashem and to gain certain qualities, certain attitudes, and certain practices that were never done before in your life. It means to get better. *Teshuva* actually means to get better.

Now, we're going to study that subject. When the Torah talks about the subject of *teshuva*, it says (Devarim 30:12): *Ki hamitzvah hazos, this commandment of teshuva that I'm commanding you today is not something that's difficult. Lo bashamayim hee, it's not in the sky that you should say how can we go up and get it, v'lo m'eiver la'yam hee, and it's not across the sea that you have to travel a long distance, no. Ki karov eilecha hadavar meod bificha u'belevavcha l'asoso, this thing is very near to you. It's in your mouth and in your heart, which means in your mind, to do it.*

So what are we hearing? Hakadosh Baruch Hu is telling us that the mitzvah is *teshuva* is extremely easy. *Ki karov eilecha hadavar meod, the thing is very close to you. It's only a matter of bificha*

*u'belevavcha l'asoso, it's in your mouth, something you should say, and something you should think, and that is sufficient for the mitzvah of teshuva.*

Now we have to understand that actually it's not so. When you're dealing, let's say, with the public like today, you will have many things that people have to be told that *do* require a drastic change in their lifestyle. Sometimes a man has to give up his *parnassa*, his profession, for the sake of *teshuva*. Sometimes people have to be told to sacrifice their ambitions, their careers, for *teshuva*.

### **Teshuva for The Righteous**

But when Moshe Rabbeinu was telling the Am Yisroel these words, you have to picture the circumstances. It was in the *midbar* and the people were all *shomrei Shabbos*. Everybody ate kosher and everybody kept *taharas hamishpacha*. There was no question about anyone doing a sin in the *midbar* that others could notice. That was out of the question. Even a hundred years ago, in a small Jewish town or in a big Jewish city; in Vilna let's say, it was impossible for a Jew to walk through the street without a hat. He wouldn't survive. Every Jew went to the *beis haknesses*; there wasn't a Jew who didn't put on *tefillin*. It was the national practice for the Jewish people to keep *kol haTorah kula*. And in the *midbar* certainly everybody kept everything! So the question arises, so what talk is there of *teshuva* when everybody is perfect?

And the answer is, that absolutely there is talk of *teshuva*. Because *teshuva* means something entirely different than you imagined. Doing *mitzvos* is the minimum that's required of a Jew. It doesn't make you special; it's not your great achievement in life. It's like a man who walks in the street naked, and let's say, another person is clothed in shorts, that's all. Now the man who is wearing shorts might feel extremely dignified. Look how important I am, I'm dressed in *bigdei yom tov, bigdei malchus*. He's wearing shorts, this fellow, but he looks at his naked friend, and he imagines himself to be dignified. When comparing yourself to others, certainly people can deceive themselves. But in those days everybody was clothed in *mitzvos*. That was the bare minimum. Everybody did everything. And still,

there was so much *teshuva* to be done, that for lack of *teshuva*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu threatened them with the *tocheicha*. And we see what happened eventually. And don't think that it was because the people threw away the Torah and that's why they were sent out into exile. No, the *neviim* didn't accuse them of eating what was not kosher. The *neviim* never accused anybody of disregarding the laws of *taharas hamishpacha*. That was out of the question - everybody kept everything. And still there is a necessity for *teshuva*, and a very great necessity for *teshuva*. To make your way closer to Hashem in ways that you don't ever think about. And these are the things that *adam dosh b'akayvav*, that people trample under their feet.

Now, when Hashem says that these things that I'm commanding you, the *teshuva* for these things is very easy, *ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od*, now let's not make any error. They're extremely important and they are the things that we enumerate in *al chait shechatanu lifanecha*. Because if you look at the list of sins that we're going to start saying tomorrow, you will not find once a mention of shedding blood. Bloodshed is not mentioned there. Jews didn't have anything to regret when it came to homicide. Sins like, homosexuality, *chas v'shalom*, didn't exist among the Jewish people at all. There was no such thing as mixed dancing. Like you can find today in this crazy society, a synagogue which considers itself Orthodox, and after Yom Kippur they have a Yom Kippur dance, which is *y'hareig v'al ya'avov*. Such lunatics didn't exist in those days.

### **A Jew Who Keeps Everything Still Needs Teshuva**

But we, the better ones, don't need *grobbe aveiros*, severe sins, in order that we should feel a necessity to do *teshuva*. A Jew who keeps all the *mitzvos* of the Torah has to know that there is a very great peril facing him on the *yom hadin* because there are numberless things that he tramples underfoot that he must rectify. Countless things that he must repair, that he must do *teshuva* for. And his life depends on keeping in mind this principle that the *aveiros she'adam dosh b'akayvav*

will be there *m'subin lo l'yom hadin*. They'll be there waiting in ambush for him.

And therefore, right now we are addressing an audience that are all Orthodox Jews, and everybody keeps everything. And we're not going to talk about sins that today you will hear about in the camp outside of the Orthodox. We won't talk about anything that's severe in the eyes of the *hamon am*, that even the multitude will agree that's a sin. No; we're talking about things that people, even the most Orthodox, commit. And still, they're so serious that he has to worry about them on the Day of Judgment.

### **Get Close To Hashem In Easy Ways**

Now, we'll start with the easiest of all, because that's the subject, things that are so easy to do that it's a pity to overlook them. Opportunities to come to Hashem, *v'shuvu el Hashem*, to do *teshuva*, to become better. And number one is the great necessity of keeping your mouth closed. When you consider how simple that is, you'll begin to understand how guilty you really are. I will have to take the time now to explain about this subject so that you'll understand how severe it really is - just because it's simple.

You know in *tzitzis* there are two kinds of threads. There are threads of blue wool, which are expensive. In the days of old, when they wore *tzitzis* they wore blue wool *techeiles* on the *tzitzis*. And it was very expensive. And they also had threads of white wool which were not as expensive. The *gemara* says in *Mesichta Menachos* says like this: Suppose a man neglected to put blue threads in his *tzitzis*. So naturally, he is guilty. When *techeiles* was available, it was a sin to neglect it. But let's say he neglected to put in white threads, that the *gemara* says is a much bigger sin. Much more severe. Why is it much worse? Because white threads are easier to find, they're cheaper to purchase. *Kasheh onsho shel lavan m'onsho shel techeiles*, the punishment for neglecting the white threads is bigger than the punishment for neglecting the blue threads, because whatever is *easier* is the bigger obligation. So now we begin to understand how serious are the easy sins. Those things that are so easily avoided

have with them a very great responsibility if a person transgresses them.

### **The Mitzvah Of Making Small Talk**

Now, it costs no money to keep the mouth closed. And we have to know that keeping the mouth open entails very many wrong things. First of all, we have to know there's a sin called *devarim biteilim*. Idle talk is considered a sin. Even though it's kosher idle talk, nothing wrong is said. But the *gemara* in *Mesichta Yuma* says, *V'dibarta bam*, "You can speak in them," meaning that in *divrei Torah* you should speak. You can speak all day long in *divrei Torah*, until your tongue wears out, but *v'lo bedeverim acheirim*, not other things. *V'debarta*, and you should speak. In what should you speak? *Bam*, only in them, only in words of Torah. Talking idle talk means that you're oiver on an *asei*, on a *mitzvas asei*. And then the *gemara* adds, that besides the *mitzvas asei*, there's also a *lav m'divrei nevi'im: Kol hadevarim yega'im*, all the words are wearisome, *lo uchal ish l'daber*, a man has no permission to talk. Which means, you must speak to be sociable; if you see that someone requires some comradeship, someone requires a little sociability, you must soothe them with some kindly and friendly words; certainly. Even the biggest *tzaddikim* spent time talking to people who needed consolation and counsel and encouragement. But suppose that person wants to do the talking himself and you butt in and you want to unload your own words on him, then you have to know that there's a sin of *devarim biteilim*. However, we're not going to dwell on that because that's just the beginning.

### **The Other Lashon Hara**

There is a sin of saying words that hurt. And now we come to a very important subject. *Devarim biteilim* is also important, but now we're talking about what's called *lashon hara*. Now don't get me wrong; a lot of *tzaddikim* who learned about *lashon hara*, not to talk evil of other people, they understand is an *aveira*. And many people guard their tongues. But now we're speaking of the most severe *lashon hara*, that's the sharp tongue that hurts people's feelings. You're not slandering him; no, you wouldn't

slander a fellow Jew. But you're speaking to him in a tone that hurts. You're needling him, you're saying a sharp word, that rips at his heart. You might not even notice it, you expect everyone to just have thick skin and bear it, but just because you're oblivious to other people's feelings that will not be an excuse on the Day of Judgement.

Now the *gemara* (*Bava Metziah* 58b) explains that there are two places in the Torah where it says *lo sonu ish es amiso* - "You should not vex your fellow man." You shouldn't hurt your fellow man. In two places we have this *lav*. One is written in business things, *v'chi simkiru mimkar*, when you sell anything, *oh koneh*, or when you buy, *m'yad amisecha*, from your fellow man, *lo sonu ish es amiso*, you shouldn't vex your fellow man. It means you shouldn't cheat him. That's a *lav* of the Torah, *ona'as mamon*, cheating in money. Whether you take too much money, or you don't give him the right change, or you give him inferior merchandise, or the weights are faulty, it's all called *onaas mamon*, and it's a *lav* from the Torah.

But there's another place where the same verse is repeated as follows: *V'lo sonu ish es amiso v'yareisa m'Elokecha* - "You shouldn't vex your fellow man and you should be afraid of Hashem." So the *gemara* asks, what's the second *pasuk* talking about? We don't need two identical *pesukim* on the same subject. And the *gemara* answers, *kan b'onaas mamon*, the first *pasuk* is talking about vexing a man by cheating him in money matters. And the second *pasuk* is speaking about vexing a man by hurting his feelings with words. So by hurting somebody's feelings, it's a *lav lo sonu ish es amiso*.

### **Which Is More Severe?**

Now the *gemara* compares the two. What's more severe, *ona'as mamon*, cheating a man in money, or *ona'as devarim*, hurting his feelings with words? So the *gemara* says (*ibid.*) in the name of Rabbe Shimon bar Yochai, *gadol onaas devarim m'onaas mamon*, vexing with words is greater than vexing with money. First of all, *she'zeh b'gufo v'zeh b'mamono*, if you hurt a person's feelings you're hurting that person physically. You hurt his heart, you hurt his mind, his emotions. You're hurting his

nerves, it's his health that you're hurting. That's *b'gufo*. But when you take away money it's only from his property, from his pocket. So therefore, *onaas devarim* is much more serious. A second consideration the *gemara* says: *she'zeh nitain l'hishavoin*, money you can always give back. Of course you shouldn't take, but if you rob somebody, you can always give back the money. And you should make sure to give back. If you're ashamed that he should know, so buy a postal money order and send it anonymously to him. Pay him. *Ona'as mamon* is *nitain l'hishavon*. You can pay back. But *v'zeh lo nitain l'hishavon*; biting words can never be taken back. You can ask for forgiveness, but you can't take back the damage.

Let's say you stick a knife in somebody's heart and then you say, "I'm sorry, forgive me." Even if the man says "Okay, I forgive you," but that's not undoing the damage. He has a knife in his heart. The damage is done. And *teshuva* requires to undo the damage. *But you can never undo an unkind word!* Now we're not talking here of being nice and polite and *derech erez*; we're talking now straight Torah. And in Torah it's considered as if he's *oiver* on a *lav*, no less than any other transgression in the Torah, no less than eating a ham sandwich. It's actually much worse than eating a ham sandwich.

And the third reason that hurtful words is more severe than stealing money, the *gemara* says, is *she'zeh lo neemar v'yareisa*, on money matters the Torah doesn't add the words "You should fear Hashem." Now, you certainly you should fear Hashem if you're going to cheat somebody in money matters. And there's a lot to be afraid of. But the Torah doesn't say these words. However, when it comes to hurting somebody's feelings, it says *v'yareisa m'Elokecha*. You'd better be afraid of Hashem Elokecha.

### **The Immoral Shopkeepers**

So now let's picture this. We have a case; here is a storekeeper on this side of the street, a very honest man. When you go into his store you can trust him for the price. His weights are honest and you never have to count your change! You know that he's the most honest fellow you could find.

Now, on the other side of the street, there's a man who is cunning and tricky, and you have to be careful with him. He's sneaky in money matters. With him you have to keep your eyes wide open because has a name that sometimes he cheats. So there's no question, we know who is a good man, and who is a not good man.

But sometimes it's not so. Suppose the righteous man on this side who is so careful in money matters has a sharp tongue. He's impatient. When the customers are congregating in his store sometimes he's impatient and he insults one or the other. He hurts people's feelings. You learned already that you have to keep your mouth closed when you deal with him because he can bite you with his words. Whereas the other fellow, the one who's not careful with your money, never hurts anybody's feelings; he's easy going. Even though you're crowding, you're snooping behind the counter looking at the merchandise, he doesn't say anything. When you want to return a spoiled milk, he takes it back with a smile. He's easygoing.

So now, according to the *gemara* we see a new attitude towards the two. This man who is honest, he's the real crook. He steals people's money because taking away their happiness by hurting their feelings is much worse than taking away their money, much worse. The *gemara* says it's at least three times as bad. This fellow on the other side, he's a righteous man. The fact that he steals money, all right, he steals money, but he doesn't hurt your feelings. And that makes him much more virtuous. That's looking at these two men through the lens of the Torah. From a Torah perspective, this man with the nice tongue is much better.

### **He Keeps Stealing from His Wife!**

And now you can understand that when married couples live together day after day and week after week and they're frequently saying unkind words to each other, you can understand how in the course of a year it accumulates into large heaps, mountains of *aveiros*. And not just *aveiros*; severe *aveiros*.

Suppose a man would give his wife, a certain amount of money, a hundred dollars, let's say, so

that she should go and buy something for herself. So she's so happy, so she starts dressing to go out and buy that thing. Now he's a stingy fellow, a conniver, and while she's dressing puts his hand in her pocketbook and he takes away some of the money; he steals some of it from her. That's an unkind deed, an *avlah*. You wouldn't even picture such a thing. Such a crooked man we wouldn't imagine.

But it's happening all the time! Because when a man says to his wife a word that's abrasive, that's cutting, that hurts her feelings, or even if he says a polite word but he says it in an impolite tone, that man is a robber, he's stealing. And you have to know how great is the *aveira* of *onaas devarim*; the *gemara* says that it's a very severe sin, very perilous.

### **No Cost Involved!**

Now, how easy it would have been to avoid that! Does it cost any money for a person to say the words kindly, or at least to just keep his mouth shut? *Ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od*, how near, how close, how easy that thing is. Now, if you had to go outside in the cold weather, in the storm, in order to buy something to fulfill a mitzvah, well, if you didn't, so it's wrong; but still you have some excuse for yourself. It might not be the best excuse but it's something at least. But here we're talking about where no effort is entailed; it involves no cost to keep the mouth closed.

So we understand now that *kasheh onsho shel lavan yoser m'onsho shel techeiles*. Just like the man who will get punished more for ignoring the white strings, because it was easier to do, that's how it always is. The punishment for trampling on the easy things, like not berating your spouse, will be much greater than for the difficult ones. And that's the kind of *aveira* that people have to fear on the *yom hadin*. So when husbands and wives are busy insulting each other all year long, and so they say "We don't really mean it; we actually love each other, we're living together so many years," that won't take off the severity of the sins. Because it actually hurts at the time. And they don't have any regret! They trample these sins underfoot, and those are the sins that will be *m'subin lo l'yom hadin*.

### **Saying Kind Words Is Better Than Giving Money**

Now the *gemara* says in one place (Bava Basra 9b) that *hanosein pruta l'ani*, if a man gives a penny to a poor man, *misbareich b'sheish brachos*, he'll be blessed with six blessings. If you give *tzedaka*, even a penny, to a poor man, you earn for yourself six great blessings. Of course, if you could give more than a penny, you should. But suppose you could only give only little penny, and you gave it, so you're going to receive six grand blessings that are enumerated in Yeshaya (Yeshaya 58:7)! *Az tikra v'Hashem yaaneh*, then you'll call out and Hashem will answer, *tikrah*, you will cry, *v'yomer hineinu*, He will say, "Here I am." Great blessings are promised for those who give *tzedaka* to the poor. If you help out poor people, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is on your side and is going to shower upon you blessings. You may not get them immediately but eventually they're bound to come. But then the *gemara* adds a whole new dimension to the discussion: *V'hamifayso*, but if you say encouraging words to a poor man, *misbareich b'yud alef*, you're blessed with eleven blessings. Eleven blessing! A remarkable thing. For saying kind words you get eleven blessings.

Now the following question is raised in Tosfos (ibid.): When a man gives a some money to a poor man; he gives him ten dollars, let's say. And at the same time he speaks to him words of encouragement; he speaks to the poor man kindly, with respect. Does it mean that he'll get altogether eleven blessings; five more blessings for the kind words besides the six he already received for the money he parted with? Or does it mean that besides the six blessings he gets for giving the money, just for the kind words he's going to get eleven more blessings? That's the question Tosfos asks.

And he tells us that it means he's going to get seventeen blessings altogether. Not merely six for the *tzedaka* that he gave and five more for kind words. No. Just for the kind words he's going to get eleven big *brachos*. It's even better than a ten dollar bill. The kind words are more valuable than the money.

But Tosfos doesn't explain why they reached that conclusion. How does Tosfos know that it

means eleven *brachos* more and not merely five *brachos* more? He doesn't tell us. But we can now understand it ourselves; now we can understand why *Tosfos* reached that conclusion. Because we just learned that the man who is honest in money matters but he is harsh in the way he talks to people, he's considered a robber. He's robbing a person of his happiness, of his self-respect, by insulting him and by hurting his feelings, and that is worse than taking away money. So we'll understand as well that one who *gives* a person self-respect and he honors him and encourages him, *it's better than giving him money!* We can't say that for giving money should be six *brachos* and for encouraging him only five more, no. Because encouraging people with words is a much greater act of virtue than giving them money. And therefore when a man is kindly, when he speaks words that make people feel happy, that man is considered as if he's constantly giving, and he will be much more rewarded than the one who gives the greenbacks, because he's giving something more important!

### **Think About All the Missed Opportunities!**

And now, when we start thinking about that we should become frightened. You begin thinking: "Look at all the opportunities I had to say some encouraging words to people, some kindly words." Even your own wife; you come home from work or from the *yeshiva*, and she's at her wits end. The children are making her crazy. You know how easy it would be to give her a few words of encouragement to lift her spirits. As you're standing outside of your home holding the doorknob, before you come in, stop for a half minute, thirty seconds on the clock, and plan out in your head some kind words of encouragement. And what about your husband, when he comes home from work; he's tired, worn out. His boss is harassing him at work. It would have been so easy for you to say one encouraging word to him. Let's say he was telling you something about his difficulties in the office, at his place of business, and you could have encouraged him with a few quiet, kindly words. But what did you do instead? At best, nothing.

Think of the great opportunity that you lost. Maybe you even needled him. Suppose instead of kind words you said to him "It's your fault! "You don't take my advice, and that's why it happened to you. Why are you always fighting with other people? You're always looking for trouble with your customers." You pour salt on his wounds. So not only are you not giving encouraging words, but you're destroying him. You have to understand what a great mistake that is. And nobody thinks about that, and they trample it under their feet. And in some families it goes on frequently, very frequently. Recrimination, constant needling each other, back and forth; a *gehinom* of *aveiros*.

### **Praise Hashem With Silence**

Now you can begin to understand what it means when people have not learned the importance of serving *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* at least with silence. Like it states *l'cha dumiya tehila*, to You, Hashem, silence is praise. Many times by our silence we actually are praising and serving Hashem. Just by closing your mouth. And that's what the Torah says, *ki karov eilecha hadavar meod*, really it's so easy for you. You fool, you lunatic; you come home from your shop and you're looking for a fight with your wife. She is tired too, all day long with the children, and she already cooked supper for you. It's not ready exactly when you want it, so what about it? Do you have to needle her and hurt her, and make a scandal out of nothing at all?! You have to know what a big *rasha* you are. A *rasha*, a lunatic, you are. You *mishugenah!* It's a great opportunity to serve Hashem with silence; it costs *nothing* to be silent. You take a *sefer* and wait until supper is ready, or lie down on the couch and rest, and keep your mouth shut. These things are so easy to fulfill and instead people trample them underfoot. And they don't realize that they are putting themselves in the greatest peril on the Day of Judgment. And that's why it says *ki karov eilecha hadavar meod*, the thing is very close, very easy to you.

### **Avimelech's Sin**

When Avraham Avinu came to *G'rar*, we know that the Torah relates that Avimelech asked him,



“Who is this woman with you?” He saw a beautiful woman with Avraham and that was his first question. So Avraham said, *Achosi hee*, she’s my sister. And Avimelech didn’t hesitate; he took her and brought her to his palace. That night he had a dream that he was going to be put to death for taking away a married woman. So in the morning he came to Avraham and said, “Why did you deceive me?” And Avraham said, “Because when a stranger comes to town, the people are supposed to be asking about one thing: “Do you have a place to eat? A place to sleep?” But you didn’t ask any of these questions. You asked me, “Who is this woman with you? Is she your sister or your wife?” Oh, if that’s your question, then I know I have what to be careful from. And so immediately I said, “There’s no *yiras Elokim b’makom hazeh*, there’s no fear of G-d in this place, and therefore I had to deceive you.”

Now the question arises, but why should Avimelech have been sentenced to death; after all, he was deceived by Avraham? And the *gemara* answers (Bava Kama 92a), because it was Avimelech who forced Avraham to deceive him with his wrong behavior, by the type of questions he asked. *Shehaya lo lilmod v’lo lomad* - he should have learned correct behavior. *Mi’kan*, from here we learn, the *gemara* says, that a *ben Noach*, even a gentile, *sh’neherag*, he’s put to death, *shehaya lo lilmod v’lo lamud*, because he should have learned and he didn’t learn. Had he gone to listen to Avraham - Avraham was speaking all the time, he had thousands of *talmidim* - had Avimelech listened to Avraham, he would have learned how to behave when wayfarers pass through, how to put the right questions to them. And since he didn’t learn and he asked the wrong questions, so he was guilty. He’s not innocent. It was necessary for Avraham to deceive Avimelech for his own self-defense. Avraham couldn’t have said, “It’s my wife,” because he was afraid that Avimelech would kill him in order to take Sarah. And therefore, Avimelech was sentenced to death because he should have learned.

### **You’re Guilty for Not Knowing**

So we’re learning here a big principle about all these easy things that a person could have fulfilled

without any effort. He cannot say “I claim exemption because of ignorance.” Because it’s easy to learn! We’re not requiring him to study *sugyos chamuros* with *gemara* and *tosfos*. No, we’re talking about fundamentals of proper living, proper behavior, that are easy to learn. And because there are so many opportunities to learn the fundamentals, therefore those who neglect these opportunities are held entirely guilty. If there are lectures such as these where you could learn, and if there are *seforim* you could learn, then you will be held responsible.

### **The Generous Milkman**

And that brings us to the subject of passing somebody on the street with an unfriendly face. Now you might think it’s only a small thing. “What?!” you’ll say. “Am I obligated to be an actor and to smile to him?” Now, listen what the *gemara* (Kesubos 111b) says. *Gadol hamalbin shinayim l’chaveiro*, it’s a greater accomplishment when you smile, when you show your teeth to someone in a smile, *yoser m’mashkeihu chalav*, more than giving him a drink of milk. Now suppose somebody is thirsty, a fellow Jew is passing you by on the street and you know he’s thirsty. And you have a big can of milk, or you have a big case full of bottles of milk. What does it cost to save a fellow Jew from privation? Let’s say he’s a *meshulach* from Eretz Yisrael, or from Williamsburg, and the man has been walking around all day trying to collect a little money for his family or for his institution. Would you begrudge him a drink of milk? It’s unthinkable. Certainly you’d be happy to offer him a glass of milk because you know how important it is for a thirsty and hungry man.

But the *gemara* is telling us now, that this man, *more* than he needs a cup of milk, he is even more thirsty for a smile from you. Of course, he’s looking for money. He’s not walking around knocking on doors for smiles because he can’t pay his grocery bill with your smile. But when you encounter another Jew, you should know that this Jew, no matter how wealthy or poor he is, he is hungry and thirsty for your smile.

### **Robbing Someone Else with Your Face**

And don't think that it's a small matter. Let's say you pass an acquaintance and you have a glum face. Now it could be that you're thinking about your own worries; it's not because you hold that person in light esteem, not because you despise that person, you don't scorn him. But why is he guilty because your wife just yelled at you? It's bad enough you have to suffer. Why does this fellow on the street have to suffer as well? And therefore, the fact that you deprived him of what he needs most urgently is considered as if you have robbed him of what's coming to him.

It's a *mishna in Mesechta Avos*: Shammai says: *Hevei mikabel es kol adam b'simcha*, you should greet every man with joy. Show him that you're happy to see him. That doesn't mean that you have to be happy, maybe you're not - but no matter, you have to show a happy face. And we learn this again and again. *Hevei mikabel es kol haadam b'sever panim yafos* - You should receive people with a pleasant cast of countenance (*Avos 1:15*). This was explained here already (See *Toras Avigdor Parshas Vayeshev*). *Sever panim yafos* includes three elements. First of all, it includes *panim*. You have to show your *face* to a person, not your ear. Secondly, you have to show a face with *sever*, with *sevara*, with interest, like you're actually thinking about him. You're interested in that person. And thirdly, *yafos*. It has to be a *pleasant* countenance.

### **The Husband That Should Have Stayed on The Subway**

Now we shouldn't think that these are commandments only for great *tzaddikim*, for *anshei maaseh*, and therefore if we neglect them we have done nothing wrong. No. That's *aveiros she'adam dosh b'akayvav*. It rankles you when you pass somebody on the street and he doesn't bother to smile to you; it rankles. Sometimes he doesn't even recognize you at all. He knows you, he looks at you and doesn't even make the slightest movement with his head. Sometimes you even wish him a good morning, and he doesn't even answer. He's living in a cloud. You must know that that man has committed a serious error. And that's one of the things that he

has to be afraid of on the *yom hadin*. These things add up until they become like a heavy rope of many individual threads. *K'avosos agalah chataah*, the thin threads of *aveiros* add up and become like thick ropes of sin.

And so now we see, what the Torah means *ki karov eilecha hadavar*, the thing is very close to you, very close to you. *B'ficha u'b'levavcha laasoso*. It's a matter of words, a few words, the right words. When you come home from work, why are you looking for a fight with your wife, and making a tragedy out of the calm home? They need you home for that?! You could have well just stayed on the subway! Or a woman that picks a fight with her husband and tries to find something to criticize when all he needs is a little rest and consolation. Husbands and wives are committing the worst errors towards each other. And with just a few kind words, soft words of encouragement, positive words, you could have done real *teshuva*, the *teshuva* of *el Hashem*, of coming back to Hashem.

### **Mountains That Could Have Been Easily Uprooted**

And it's not only on the Day of Judgement in this world, on *Yom Kippur*, that will you be surprised by all the sins that you trampled on. But on the great *yom hadin* when you come to the Next World you'll be amazed! You'll think of all people that you wronged. Maybe neighbors, maybe relatives, maybe others you wronged. But your own husbands and wives certainly were the last ones you would have wronged, you think. Absolutely wrong! The ones you sinned most against were your closest ones. Husbands and wives are going to be held accountable in the next world for *very great wrongs*, heaps, mountains of *aveiros*, mountains of unkind words, and glum faces that they showed to each other instead of being quiet. At least that! To keep your mouth closed! The minimum should be silence. And silence with a friendly face, or even a few words, is so easy to achieve that the Torah says you're blamed for that. You'll be held accountable for the words you *could* have said. The punishment for what's easy to do is much greater than for what's hard. A few words!

So if you take your wife out, let's say, and buy her a diamond necklace, it's not so easy. Maybe once in your lifetime you can do it. You should do it sometime. But when a man is stingy with his words, stingy from giving his wife kindly words constantly in the house, that's a thousand times worse than being stingy with money. He constantly needles her. He says, my mother said this about you, and my sister said this about you. Or *chas v'shalom*, he says, even hints, that other women are prettier. That's a knife in the heart. I know one stupid fool who said that to his wife. She called me up and complained, he said that other women are more pretty than she is. A man should never admit such a thing. His wife should be the most beautiful woman in the world. And if he can't say it, let him keep quiet at least. But they're constantly sticking daggers in each other, and these daggers are going to rise up on the *yom hadin*, and they're going to be the most dangerous, fearful opponents, fearsome opponents. A person will be amazed to find that he has enemies that are attacking him and accusing him and pointing a finger at him on the *yom hadin*. All because of what husbands and wives said to each other. All because of what neighbors say to one another. Even what friends say to each other.

### **The Secret of Becoming Great**

Now we're coming to another subject on a different level entirely. But it's something that we must consider when we're thinking about improving ourselves. When the subject of *teshuva* is brought up this always should be included. We're going to quote the Mesilas Yesharim at the end of chapter sixteen. He talks about the great men of our past who were chosen by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Now it really is worthwhile to study the following subject, he says. Why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu favor these great personalities? It's a subject we should investigate. What was the reason Hakadosh Baruch Hu loved Avraham so greatly? Why did He love Moshe Rabbeinu so greatly? We think we know. We know that Avraham had ten trials, *asara nisyonos*, and he passed them all successfully, and so on. Moshe Rabbeinu was devoted to his people, was a servant of Hashem with all his heart, an *eved*

*ne'eman*. But we're making a big error. We don't understand *at all* the greatness of our great men.

Now listen. *Hinei b'emes*, I'll read in English: He says "This in truth is the test that the servants of Hashem were tested by and this is what set apart each one according to his degree of greatness. What was the test? The test was the one who knew how to purify his heart more and he was the one who was closer to Hashem and more beloved to Him." What does that mean? So he explains that "when they did *the ordinary deeds* - not the great deeds that are written in the Torah, the heroic deeds of self-sacrifice that we speak about - but even their daily deeds were done with the intention of serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu."

### **Using Our Minds**

And so when Avraham Avinu was busy managing his sheep and his cattle - that was his business, raising livestock - he was thinking always about serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When Avraham was in his tent with Sarah, or Sarah was in the tent with Avraham, each one was thinking how to talk in a way that would serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When they sat down to eat, they ate with the thought how can they please Hakadosh Baruch Hu with their way of eating. Now anybody who would have been present wouldn't have heard anything. You might have heard great things too, no question that whatever words were exchanged were noble words. But what was doing in their minds no reporter could have noted. No tape recorder would have recorded their thoughts in their minds. It's true that all of their conversation was noble, and their acts were noble and dedicated to Hashem. But says the Mesillas Yesharim "the true nobility of these great people was the way they lived in their inner lives, the way they thought." That's a remarkable statement that we're hearing now, that in every physical, material act that they did, they were thinking always of *doing it for the purpose of Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

At the end of *U'va l'tzion*, we make a statement. We ask that Hashem should put into our hearts the love of Him and the fear of Him. *Hu yiftach libeinu b'soraso v'yaseim b'libeinu ahavaso v'yiraso* - He should put the love and fear of Him into our hearts.

U'l'avdo b'levav shaleim, and to serve Him with a perfect heart; that means a perfect *mind*. Now listen to the following words: Why are we asking for this? Why is it so important? *L'maan lo niga larik*, in order that we shouldn't toil in vain, *v'lo naileid l'bihala*, we shouldn't give birth to nothingness; it means we shouldn't give birth to deeds that are for nothing.

### **We're Wasting Our Lives!**

Because people spend a lot of time and effort doing things; you spend effort on your home, you spend effort on preparing meals, on cleaning the house, you spend effort on taking care of your clothing. Who doesn't spend hours during the week for material things in his home and his business?! And everything is done with an empty mind, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is completely absent! And that means that it's a waste of effort. Our lives fly out the window, in the garbage; it's one hundred percent nothing at all. The tragedy of all tragedies is to live in vain. *L'maan lo niga larik*, we shouldn't toil for nothing. And therefore we have to understand that this is a subject that is obligatory. It's not a voluntary thing for great *tzaddikim*.

If you look in the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim (231) there's a whole chapter devoted to the subject of eating *l'sheim shamayim*. It's a remarkable thing. It's a *halacha* that when you eat, at least for a moment you should have in mind "my purpose in eating now, is so that I should be able to serve You Hashem." But when people sit down at the table and just shove food down their throat without any thought except themselves, they should know that they're committing a sin. And it's a sin that's so easy to repair! You're trampling on these sins underfoot. Because you can still enjoy your meal, you can still eat all the courses that you eat; Hashem *wants* you to enjoy. All that's necessary is to *add one thought*, "I'm eating this food to have the strength to serve Hashem. Strength to learn in the Yeshiva, or to go to my business and make money for my family."

Now don't think "It's hypocrisy, I'm an honest person. I can't say that." *Be a hypocrite* and think that thought. Even better, say it when nobody's listening; say that you're eating for the purpose of serving Hashem. Or say a *pasuk*: *poseiach es yadecha*

*u'masbia l'chol chai ratzon*, I thank You Hashem for opening up Your hand. Forget about *birchas hamazon*. *Birchas hamazon* is not enough. It doesn't express it properly because we gallop through it; it's just a formality, a ritual. So do it while you still have the food in front of you. You should think a thought of gratitude to Hashem while you're eating.

We'll soon come to that subject. Right now, to think that you're eating *l'sheim shamayim*. That's not a small a thing, and it's an *aveira she'adam dosh b'akayvav* that will be *sovivim oso b'yom hadin*. And there's no effort involved except a little moment of reflection. And that's *ki karov eilecha hadavar meod*, how close it is to you to do these things. So get busy adding some thought to the things you are doing anyhow.

### **It Remains Without Saying...**

You're in your place of business; does it cost you money to think that your intention is that part of your earnings will go to *tzedaka*? And part will pay for *schar limud* for your children. And part will pay for support of your synagogue. And part will pay to buy someday *tzitzis* and *tefillin* and maybe a *lulav* and an *esrog*. And it will pay for the rent of your house where you'll maintain a *frum* Jewish home and serve Hashem. "Oh," you say. "Certainly, that's a superfluous thing, it goes without saying." Ah, it goes without saying, that's the great pity. It *remains without saying, without thinking* and a man can pass years and years, working for *rik*, for nothing. In his subconscious mind he may have such thoughts. If you press him about it, he may be able to say the right things. But never once did he express it. And the great tragedy is that it cost no money, no effort is involved. *Ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od*, how close this thing is to you, *b'ficha*, just with your mouth, *u'b'levavcha*, with your heart, with your mind, *laasoso*, to do it. And so we begin to see that the great part of the subject of *teshuva* is so immensely easy that the responsibility for it becomes immensely vast.

Now when a person does big sins, let's say a person does very big sins, *chas veshalom*, let's say he does twenty big sins every day. Let's say he smokes on Shabbos twenty cigarettes. Each one is a very

big *aveira*, he's *chayav misa* for each one. Twenty times he is *chayav misa*! He has to be put to death for each cigarette. Not each cigarette, for each puff. Every puff he's *madlik, maavir*; he's *chayav misa* for each puff.

### **The Twentieth Cigarette**

Now, suppose we would approach that man and say, "Look, tomorrow is Yom Kippur, so maybe you'll do *teshuvah* and you'll smoke only nineteen cigarettes on Shabbos." He says, "What will I accomplish if anyway I'll be *chayvei misa* nineteen times? So what will one more make any difference?" So you have to tell him as follows: "That last one is more severe than all twenty together, because that one is so easy to avoid. And for not dropping that one, you have to know there's a bigger penalty than all the others together."

And so, when people are able to think at least once *l'sheim shamayim*, it's so easy, and even that they don't do, then they have to know what a great responsibility, what a great sin it is. If people are able to come home let's say, and at least keep their mouths shut if they can't say kind words. If instead of scowling they can just wear an ordinary friendly face, it costs no money at all. You have to realize how great is the responsibility on the *yom hadin* for that.

### **The Tragedy Of Passing By A Mezuzah**

And therefore the *kavana l'sheim shamayim* is also something that takes its place in the forefront of those that will accuse a man on the *yom hadin*. Do you mean to say you never thought once that you're eating *l'sheim shamayim*?! Or you didn't think before doing a *mitzvah* that you're doing it *l'sheim shamayim*. Many times people do *mitzvos* and they don't think of the purpose of the *mitzvah*. When you pass a *mezuzah*, isn't it a tragedy that day in and day out you're not getting a *mitzvah*? By having a *mezuzah* on your door you're always having a *mitzvah* of letting the *mezuzah* be on the door. But that's not the purpose of the *mitzvah*. You should be reminded of Hashem every time you pass the *mezuzah*. But instead you pass in and out without thinking about it. And so you must put your mind

even on *mitzvos*, even the *mitzvos* you must do *l'sheim shamayim*. That's what the Torah is demanding, *b'levavcha*, in your hearts.

And therefore, we come know to the big subject of *chovos halevavos*, the duties of the hearts. The duties of the hearts, that's what the Torah really is hinting at, that's what Hashem wants from you - all the things that people can fulfill just by their minds. The obligation of living with their mind is a paramount Torah obligation, and it is the greatest achievement of man in this world.

### **Being Afraid of Hashem**

And of all the obligations, we're going to single out just one for now. And that's the *mitzvah* of being afraid of Hashem. How great is the virtue of being afraid, *pashut* afraid of Hashem. Afraid of everything that could happen, *chas veshalom*. To fear Hashem. The Torah tells us, *Vayihi ki yaru hamiyaldos es haElokim*, the midwives when they were summoned by Pharaoh, and he commanded them that they should kill the Jewish children, the Israelite boys. Now they were very much afraid of Pharaoh. You couldn't disobey a king in the olden days. Everybody melted away when a king said something; they were so afraid. And these women, they weren't men, they were women, and still they went home and they disobeyed. Why? Because they were afraid of Hashem more than they were afraid of Pharaoh.

They were afraid; *ki yaru hamiyaldos es haElokim*. Now don't think that they weren't afraid of Pharaoh. They trembled from Pharaoh, they couldn't sleep anymore. They stopped sleeping, these women. But because they feared Hashem, they refused to obey him. And because of that, *Va'yaas lahem batim*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewarded them with *batim*. He gave them great families in the Jewish nation. The most important families in our people are descended from these women who feared Hashem. That's how great is the virtue of being afraid of Hashem is.

### **Love Without Fear?!**

Now when Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to praise Avraham Avinu after the tenth test that He gave him, the *akeida*, and Avraham passed the test

successfully, what did Hakadosh Baruch Hu say about him? What words, what title did he give him? He says *atah yadati ki yarei Elokim atah* - Now I know that you are a man who fears Elokim. To fear Hashem, that's the paramount achievement. How can a person live his life without being afraid of Hashem? He loves Judaism, he loves *mitzvos*, he's enthusiastic about it, he may even learn. But where is the fear, to be afraid of Hashem? That's a *mitzvah* in the Torah, *es Hashem Elokecha tirah*, fearing Hashem is in itself a very great obligation. To live one's life without fear of Hashem constantly is a tragedy. At least once a day to think about it, "I'm fearing Hashem, I'm afraid." Not just awe, not just respect. "I'm afraid of Hashem."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu has ways and means of carrying out His retribution. *Chas veshalom* crossing a street, cars are coming from all directions. Suddenly a car turns, it's going too fast to stop. And sometimes it jumps the curb. And there's nothing you can do about it. It's too late. You have to be afraid! Suddenly a cell in a man's body goes wild; it begins to misbehave. Nobody can be certain that *chas veshalom* something wouldn't suddenly happen to him.

You see on all sides, things happens to people who never expected it. There could be a person, a boy, fourteen years old who's perfectly well, he's getting ready to enjoy a long happy life. And suddenly he has a certain pain in his neck and he's taken to the hospital and he has leukemia. Leukemia! "Ay yah yay," he says. "Why should it happen to me?" These things happen suddenly, constantly. Accidents in the house, constantly. And therefore people should learn to be afraid of Hashem - not to live in fear of things that might happen, but to live in fear of Hashem who can make anything happen.

That's a *mitzvah* of the Torah, to learn to be afraid of Hashem constantly. Even if everything is

going smoothly, even when you're doing things that are proper, you're fulfilling everything, still you must bring into your heart a fear of Hashem. When you walk into the street, you fear Hashem. Even a king who is secure, he has bodyguards all around him, he has to learn to fear Hashem. That's why he carries a *sefer* Torah wherever he goes. So that he should learn to fear Hashem. To learn, to train oneself constantly to have that in your heart, is an important form of *teshuva*. And by not doing it, by neglecting that, no matter how *frum* a person is, you must know that that's one of the things that he's trampling underfoot and it will be *m'subin lo l'yom hadin*.

### **You Heard Ideas, Now Get Busy!**

And so we come back now to that statement in the Torah. *Ki hamitzvah hazos*, this commandment that I am commanding you today, *lo bashamayim hee*, it's not in the sky. Who will go up into the sky to bring it down for us, no, it's not that difficult. *V'lo me'ever layam*, it's not overseas. You don't have to travel to Eretz Yisroel to do *teshuva*. You don't have to go anywhere. It's right here. Where is it? It's right inside of you. *Ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od*, it's in your heart, *bificha u'b'levavcha la'asos*.

All you have to do is make up your mind that you're willing to serve Hashem in these manners, and nothing is required of you in a matter of effort, no expense, no *mesiras nefesh*. If you take these ideas that you heard here tonight, and you get busy doing them, that's the *teshuva* that Hakadosh Boruch Hu wants most. It's *v'shuvu el Hashem* - you're coming back to Hashem. And just because of that, just because these things are so easy to do, so easy to begin, that's why these are the things for which we will be held most accountable for on the *Yom Hadin*.

### **The Easy Road to Teshuva - Transcribed from tape #524**

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