

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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The Golden Calf - Entree to Repentance

The Talmud relates that the Jewish people were incapable of committing the sin of the Golden Calf on their own, for they had mastered their evil inclination. Rather, the sin was "a decree of the King, so as to provide an opening to penitents. For a sinner might think that repentance is of no avail. He is therefore shown that G-d accepted the penance of even those who committed the heinous sin of the Golden Calf."

"So as to provide an opening to penitents" refers not only to later generations; it also afforded the Jews of that time the opportunity of achieving repentance.

Repentance is not a manner of service that a sinless person can choose. Quite the contrary: "He who says, 'I shall sin and then repent' is not afforded the opportunity to repent." It is only after a person has sinned that he is provided with the opportunity to repent.

Nonetheless, the service of repentance is so great that it contains certain merits which are lacking even in the service of the truly righteous, as our Sages say: "The level attained by penitents cannot be achieved by the completely righteous."

In order for the Jews who experienced the giving of the Torah, and consequently became truly righteous, to also experience repentance, it was necessary that there be a "decree of the King." Only this enabled the evil inclination to gain temporary dominance over them; they could then experience the tremendous elevation of penitence.

One of the qualities of repentance that is lacking in the service of the completely righteous arises from the fact that a righteous individual is only capable of elevating those sparks of holiness that lie within permissible matters. His approach to evil is one of negation; it is impossible for him to transform it into holiness.

However, a sinner can, through complete repentance, effect the transformation of misdeeds into merits. Thus, he not only negates evil, but is able to elevate the holiness that was trapped within it.

This difference between the service of a completely righteous individual and the service of a penitent results not only from the fact that the righteous individual simply lacks sins to transform; it is also related to the difference between their methods of divine service. The service of the truly righteous individual is that of revealing G-dliness within the world. Since evil as it exists within the world conceals and opposes G-dliness, the righteous individual negates it.

However, the service of the penitent elevates the physical world into the realm of the holy. He is thus cognizant of the world not as something that opposes G-dliness, but rather as it is looked upon from Above.

The same is true regarding evil: Penitents realize that G-d's ultimate intent is not merely the negation of evil, but the transformation of it - through repentance - into good, thereby elevating the divine spark concealed within.

G-d's giving of the Torah revealed G-dliness in a manner that transcended the corporeal world; a Jew's repentance engages the corporeal world and transforms it into G-dliness. (Based on Likkutei Sichos Vol. XVI pp. 412-414., From: A Chassidic Dimension Vol 2) - sichosinenglish.org)

This they shall give...half a shekel (machatzit) of the shekel of the Sanctuary (Ex. 30:13) The Hebrew word "machatzit" is spelled mem-chet-tzadik-yud-tav. The letter tzadik, which also means a righteous person, is exactly in the center. The two letters nearest to the tzadik are chet and yud, which spell "chay," meaning alive. The two letters furthest from the tzadik are mem and tav, which spell "meit," or dead. From this we learn that being close to a tzadik imbues us with life, and that giving tzedaka (charity, symbolized by the half-shekel) saves us from death. (Sifrei Chasidut)

The shekel is an allusion to the soul; the gematria (numerical equivalent) of "shekel" is the same as for "nefesh" (soul). Every Jew is given "half" of his soul from Above; his obligation is to elevate the other "half" under his control to the same level as the first, through serving G-d and performing good deeds. (Rabbi Chanoch of Alexander) (From: L'Chaim 5761, #661)

And Aaron called out and said, A feast unto the L-rd is tomorrow (Ex. 32:5) How could Aaron, who was extremely righteous, have lied by referring to the making of the Golden Calf as "a feast unto the L-rd"? Actually, we see that his words were prophetic, as the day on which the Golden Calf was made (and the Tablets of the Law subsequently broken by Moses) was the 17th of Tamuz: Although in our times that date is observed by fasting, when Moshiach comes it will be transformed into "a time of joy and gladness, and a cheerful feast to the house of Judah" (Zachariah 8:19). (Maayana Shel Torah) (From: L'Chaim 5760, #608)

Two of the taxi passengers en route from Ben Gurion airport to Jerusalem struck up a casual conversation. Following the friendly "Jewish geography" exchange in which one of the travelers introduced himself as a Jew from Antwerp, his new acquaintance, a Jerusalemite, continued with the common question, "What brings you here?"

The man from Antwerp hesitated for a moment. His European nature was not as open and uninhibited as the Israeli's. But somehow, his fellow passenger put him at ease.

"I'll tell you the truth," began the visitor. "This past summer on a trip to New York, I traveled to Brooklyn to ask the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing for my handicapped son. We have had great difficulty finding a suitable match for him. As I passed by the Rebbe, he handed me a dollar saying b'suros tovos - good tidings. Then he gave me an additional dollar and said: 'For tzedakah in the Holy Land.'

"I was sure that the Rebbe had mistakenly thought I was a visitor from Israel. I didn't understand how this response applied to me, and I returned to Antwerp. Weeks passed and the holidays arrived. One day, during Chol Hamoed Sukkos, my wife and I were discussing our family affairs. We were both very concerned about the future of our son, who was not getting any younger. During the course of our conversation, my encounter with the Rebbe came up.

"My wife became thoughtful. 'Perhaps we should have taken the Rebbe's words more seriously,' she suggested. 'Let's follow his directive. Take a few days off after the holiday and travel to Israel to give tzedakah in the Holy Land, just as the Rebbe had said.'

"This is the reason for my journey," he concluded.

The visitor from Antwerp had been casting his eyes on the scenery as he told his story. It was only now that he noticed a strange mixture of awe and nervousness on the Jerusalemite's face.

"I wonder," the man was mumbling, unable to hide his excitement. Responding to the visitor's puzzled look, the man from Jerusalem struggled to regain his composure and related: "I am returning from a trip to New York, where I spent the holidays. I took the opportunity to ask the Rebbe for a blessing for my daughter. We would very much like to see her happily married. The Rebbe gave me a slice of lekach (honey cake) for my daughter saying: 'May she find a good shiduch (match) in the near future.'

The man from Jerusalem took a deep breath. "Perhaps we should both pursue the issue. You see, my daughter also has a handicap."

The engagement party was held shortly thereafter. (From: To Know and to Care Vol 1)

After drinking wine and eating one of the seven fruits (p. 96), the concluding B'racha ends: V'al Pri Hagafen V'al Hapeirot, Baruch...Al Pri Hagafen V'Hapeirot (not V'Al Hapeirot). (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, ADAR I 18).

My grandfather wrote in one of his Maamarim: "It is necessary to study some of the Written Torah daily with Rashi, for his commentaries are the T'rumat - the select - of the interpretations of our Sages." "...and at the very least everyone must study a tractate of Tal mud each year." FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, ADAR II 18).

If you can experience it, it could not be the most infinite. If you can feel it, it couldn't be the essence of G—d. The highest points in life are not the revelations and epiphanies. The highest points are the times when you just do. When you just do, you may not feel a thing. You may not have a moment to ask yourself if you feel a thing. But you are one with His essence and being. You are a ray of His light.

-From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; Compiled by Tzvi Freeman

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukka (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasiddus
	Between Mincha and Maariv	Halacha

DAILY MINYONIM

Shacharis: Mon -Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
Sunday: 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 5:50 PM

There will be no class on Wednesday, March 6.

**SHABBAT PARSHAS KI SISA -
PARSHAS PARAH**
March 1, 2002 - Adar 17

Candlelighting: 5:31 PM
Friday Mincha: 5:45 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:13 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

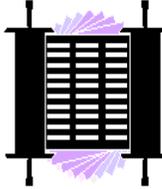
- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent
- Hagada 4:35 PM
- Mincha 5:20 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 6:31 PM

Kiddush this week is sponsored by Marty Biegel in honor of the birth of his great grandson Eliezer Tzvi.

Seuda Shlishit is being sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Davidpour in memory of Aziz Yagoubian.

Yartzeits: Etta Cohen - Adar 18, Aziz Yagoubian - Adar 19.

Happy Birthday to Dr. Alan Dauer, Rabbi Moshe Kesselman, Yakov Yehuda Shusterman, Gilda Beroukhim and Michelle.Lerer.



A Sefer Torah is being written in memory of the fathers of Rabbi & Mrs. Shusterman.

Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Mendel Shusterman at (310) 497-2643

GOOD SHABBOS!