



דרכים בפרשה

וילך-שבת שובה



In a discussion on the topic of *teshuvah*, R' Tzvi Meyer Zilverberg *shlita* writes that our main fight is not any specific life issue, *mitzvah* or even *aveira*. Rather, it is the idea that we can in fact overcome our struggles. The Holy Baal Shem Tov tells us that the greatest mistake a person can make is to believe that we can't fix our mistakes and ultimately become closer to HaShem.

Every year at this time, a familiar conversation replays itself in the heads of most Yidden. "Trying to do *teshuvah*? Been there, done that, and even bought the tee-shirt, but nothing doing. This year will just be the same as the year before. *Fait accompli*- I CANNOT CHANGE! The proof is because every year I try, and I always end up with the same result. I can't even stand in front of HaShem without being embarrassed. I'm just a failure; empty promises again and then again." One can even make a wager that most people find themselves working on the same list of things to correct 20 years later in life. So what's the point? Why bother?

The Besh"t teaches us that if our great struggle is in believing in our ability to fix things and truly become great people, than it must be that the most important thing HaShem wants from us is to learn about the great potential that we truly have. It is the realization that this year can most definitely be better. "YES I CAN!!!!"

The 4.6 million dollar question of course is: HOW? We can explain this with a *meshal* the Chafetz Chayim would relate. There is a merchant who goes into a big warehouse to order his yearly list of supplies for his business. Coming up to the front desk to place his order,

he begins: 10 skids of this, 20 of that, 13 of those, 15 of the other and so on and so forth. The workers are having a tough time even keeping up with him as he is dishing out his orders but they keep on shlepping all of the items to the front. The owner of the warehouse starts ringing through the order, nonchalantly asking him "Will that be cash or credit?" The merchant responded that he would be putting it on his tab. As the owner is finishing the order, the one way mirrored window behind the owner slides open, only to have the bookkeeper yelling from behind his desk, "Stop! Wait just a second! This merchant has a large outstanding balance from previous years that he still has not paid up. I advise you strongly not to extend him any more credit." The owner asks him if he plans on paying. Of course, he answers that he will pay it all off soon. The bookkeeper yells, "He said that last year." The merchant responds. "But this year will be different." Now the bookkeeper again yells that he said the same last year, and in fact, he has been saying this every year. His balances owing are outrageous and he deserves no more credit. He should get nothing! Sadly, the owner nods his head and tells the merchant that he has no choice. "I cannot extend you any more credit unless you make good on your previous debts." Feeling really dejected, the merchant hangs his head low and starts to exit, crying, as he needs this really badly to be able to run his business. Just then another merchant who was waiting next on line approaches him and pulls him aside. "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. It seems that you are having difficulty; let me give you some advice. You see, each year you try

the same thing, buying on credit, racking up even greater balances. But as you have no way to pay it all, there is no reason they will grant you your order. Would you be open to trying something different this time? Offer them a payment plan; something that you can for sure stick to and slowly start paying up.” After realizing that this may be his only chance, the merchant turns back to the owner and repeats this plan, offering to pay a minimal amount on a monthly basis. Again, the bookkeeper interjects, yelling, "You can't trust this man, it's just another ploy, and he will never pay up". But the owner says "NO! This time I really think he can pay up, because with small manageable payments, he can make good on it." The bookkeeper tries one last time, but to no avail. The owner pulls out his rubber stamp, and approves the transaction.

Zugt the heiliger Chafetz Chaim- each year we come to HaShem with lists of things that we need for ourselves and for our families. But of course, the *mekatreig*/prosecutor yells out that we are “in the red”, and HaShem should ch”vs not give us what we need until we make amends. The *mekatreig* further points out that we have a bad track record when it comes to fixing things up. But why is it that we indeed fall short each and every year? The answer is that we try and try to do wholesale teshuva. We look at our by now crumpled lists and we promise that this year will be better, and of course we end up nowhere. However, *yeish tikvah*-there is hope! If we can learn from the merchant and take on something small that we can for sure accomplish and stick to, this year can be different, and of course, the *Melech Malchei Hamelachim*, the real Owner, is more than happy to grant us what we need.

This sounds like a wonderful idea, but where does it come from? The Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah (22:13) tells us that when Adam met Kayin after he killed his brother Havel, he

asked him what was the result of his court case with HaShem. Adam could not understand how HaShem did not give him the greatest punishment. Kayin responded that he did *teshuvah*, ונתפשרתי I reconciled with my Master, HaShem. Adam was so happy about this that he also did *teshuvah*, and went on further to compose *Mizmor shir leyom hashaabos*. But wasn't Adam already focusing on doing *teshuva* at this point? What changed now, - what was this *chiddush* that Kayin was teaching him? The answer is found in the words that Kayin told him. ונתפשרתי – I made a p'shara- compromise with HaShem. Adam was the proverbial man. Like all of us, he tried to do wholesale teshuva, but he got nowhere. Kayin came and taught him, and ultimately showed us the way of Teshuvah.

HaShem knows that we won't be perfect, but HaShem believes that we can have a perfect day. HaShem believes that we can get through just one bracha in davening with kavana. Eventually, one bracha leads to another and one day leads to another until we are *zocheh lashuv ad HaShem*. HaShem tells us, “Do the portion that you're able to, whatever you can, and I'll complete the task of bringing you all the way.” He is the Melech that is rotzeh bis'shuva. He wants us to come back to Him more than anything. Our “*Tatteh in Himmel*” is waiting for us.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפּעל



DOWNLOAD ALL PARSHA!

the new free parsha app

