Better Being a Ba'al Teshuva?

1. דבורה

ג' (ב' אִנָּכְכֶם אֵלֹקִי: "אֶלֹקִי," אֵל֔וֹקִי אֱלֹהֵי ה' קָנָּתָה, וְנָשַׁמָּתָה בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם וְנָשַׁמָּתָה בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם.

And you return to the LORD your God, and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day,

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then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will bring you together again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

2. יְהוָה

י"ו (י"ו מַעֲלֵה יָהּ אֶלֹקִי אֱלֹהֵי ה' קָנָּתָה, וְנָשַׁמָּתָה בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם וְנָשַׁמָּתָה בִּכְלֵי בָּעָלְכֶם.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live—

3. יְהוָה

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I have therefore set before you today life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live—

K. Aaron Goldschneider
And Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yohanan said: All of the prophets only prophesied their prophecies of consolation with regard to penitents but with regard to the full-fledged righteous it is stated: “No eye has seen it, God, aside from You.”

And the Gemara notes that this statement disagrees with the opinion of Rabbi Abbahu who holds that penitents are superior to the righteous. As Rabbi Abbahu said: In the place where penitents stand, even the full-fledged righteous do not stand, as it is stated: “Peace, peace upon him who is far and him who is near.” Peace and greeting is extended first to him who is far, the penitent, and only thereafter is peace extended to him who is near, the full-fledged righteous.
This is achieved through “repentance out of love (of G-d),” coming from the depths of the heart, with great love and fervor, and from a soul passionately desiring to cleave to the blessed G-d

and thirsting for G-d like a parched and barren soul thirsts desperately for water.

For inasmuch as till now until he repented his soul had been in a barren wilderness and in the shadow of death, which is the sitra achra, and had been far removed from the light of the Divine Countenance, in the greatest possible measure,

therefore, now that he “repents out of love” his soul thirsts for G-d even more intensely than the souls of the righteous who have never sinned.

The righteous tzaddik, ever close to G-d, is like one who always has water near at hand—his thirst is never so intense. The penitent, however, finds himself as if in a desert, where the very absence of water causes his thirst to burn with greater intensity.
As our Sages say: "Where penitents stand...[not even the perfectly righteous can stand]."

For, as explained earlier, the tzaddik lacks the penitent's intense yearning for G-d.

[Only] concerning repentance out of such great love has it been said that [the penitent's] premeditated sins become, for him, like virtues, since through them (through the sins which previously had distanced him from G-d) he attained when he repented to this great love. Thus, his sins affected him in the same way as mitzvot: they brought about within him a greater love of G-d.

In summary: It is possible even now, before evil completely disappears from the earth, to extricate the vitality of forbidden acts from the kelipot, through “repentance out of love of G-d.”

THE PENITENT

The Baal Shem Tov:

11:32 The Talmud teaches that, “In the place where those who have repented stand, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand.”

I heard a reason why the person who repents is greater. He already knows the heat and enthusiasm of sin. Therefore, when he repents and becomes involved in Torah and good deeds, he does everything with great enthusiasm and intensity. He knows the meaning of enthusiasm, which is not true of the righteous person who has never experienced it.

My master [the Baal Shem Tov] also gave another reason. Good deeds and Torah study can become habitual for a righteous person, and he does not have that much feeling for them. But when a person comes back, everything is new. If he does not do everything with great attachment, he will fall from his level. He is therefore forced to worship with great enthusiasm.

Or Torah, Toledoth
Thirty-Six: Aspire to Do Teshuvah

When a person wants only to be a perfect tzaddik, it is difficult for him to be a person who engages in teshuvah. Therefore, a person should always focus on aspiring to be a person who does teshuvah, who is immersed in the idea of teshuvah, and aspiring to its actual realization.

Then his teshuvah can raise him upward to the level of perfect tzaddikim – and [even] higher than that.

Thirty-Seven: Tranquil and Turbulent Personalities

A person who engages in teshuvah must walk upon elevated paths, upon the ways of plenty and holy thought.

There are also people who were born with a nature that makes it possible for them to be righteous from their very beginning.

It may happen that they sin and do teshuvah. After their teshuvah, they can [continue] to lead their lives upon the road of those who are righteous from their very beginning – without a noticeable and constantly yearning intensity of holy flame.

But those [people] who by nature have the type of souls that make it necessary [for them] to always [engage in] teshuvah are called upon to be pious people and men of holiness.

Thirty-Eight: Leave a State of Smallness

Sometimes a person’s spirit falls into a state of smallness, and he does not find any satisfaction within himself. [This is] due to the paucity of his good deeds, the amount of his sin, and the paucity of his diligence in learning Torah.

[This] person must exert himself in the realm of the secret of thought. He must know that “the thought of a person who understands one matter [via inference] from another is more valued by the Holy One, blessed be He, than all sacrifices and burnt offerings” [Zohar, Nasso 121b].
תקן קרא את תקן כל שכם לקדש לא יחלו, שה' אלהי ישראל יחל חברה לשכנון, שאינה יאכזה את כל שכם �萸"ל.

ושחר כמקל леч תת את תשים כלל, היה: לכולת החשוב כלל מקותר ראה יהב過程 קהל.