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from: Rabbi Yochanan Zweig <[genesis@torah.org](mailto:genesis@torah.org)> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: [rabbizweig@torah.org](mailto:rabbizweig@torah.org) date: Aug 29, 2019, 3:17 PM  
subject: Rabbi Zweig on the Parsha - Don't Give It Personally  
Rabbi Zweig on the Parsha

**By Rabbi Yochanan Zweig**

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

**Parshas Reeh**

**Don't Give It Personally**

"Rather, you shall open your hand to him; you shall lend him his requirement..."(15:8)

The Torah instructs us to be open-handed with our destitute brethren. Initial assistance should be in the form of a gift.1 However, continues the verse, if the recipient is reluctant to receive a gift, we should offer assistance in the form of a loan, thereby allowing him to maintain his dignity. The next verse warns that although the seventh year of the Shemita cycle cancels all outstanding debt, we should not be deterred from issuing the loan.2 Why does a person who has already shown his willingness to assist the destitute without any compensation require a warning not to hesitate if the assistance is in the form of a loan?

When a person gives a gift he experiences a sense of expansiveness. Often it is this feeling of magnanimity which motivates his actions. When the

assistance is provided as a loan, the sense of magnanimity is lessened. Furthermore, if eventually the loan is cancelled, the recipient does not attribute his good fortune to the actions of the lender. Rather than the lender being perceived as a benefactor, he senses that the recipient has taken advantage of him. Since this is a less than satisfying experience for the lender, the Torah must reiterate that the focus of his actions should be the well-being of the needy and not his own personal satisfaction. Consequently, money should be lent unhesitatingly even when the seventh year is pending.

1. See Rashi 15:8 2. 15:9

That's What Friends Are For "This is what you shall not eat... the chasidah..." (14:12,18) The Ramban teaches that the birds which we are prohibited to eat exhibit negative character traits, and therefore, consumption of those birds would infuse these traits into the person's character.1 In light of this, it is difficult to reconcile the Ramban's teaching with the Talmud's explanation of the name "chasidah", one of the prohibited birds, so called for the "chesed" – "kindness" which it displays towards its friends.2 How could kindness be considered a negative trait?

An answer is given in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe. Since the bird only performs acts of kindness for those whom it considers to be its friends, this is a negative trait. One should be sensitive to anyone in need, not exclusively to friends.

However, this answer does not completely solve the problem. According to the Kotzker Rebbe's explanation, why does the Torah define the bird by the positive acts that it does, rather than by its negative trait, the chesed which it does not do?

Perhaps the Talmud is teaching us that since the bird considers that which it does for its friends to be a chesed, this is a negative trait. One should view that which he does for his friends as an expression of his commitment to the relationship, not as a charitable act.

1. See Ramban Parshas Shemini 11:13, these are birds that exhibit cruelty. 2. Chullin 63a.

Body And Soul "You are children to Hashem, your G-d – you shall not cut yourselves..." (14:1) The Torah juxtaposes the statement "banim atem laHashem" – "you are children to Hashem" to the prohibition "lo siggededu" – "you shall not lacerate yourselves". Rashi explains that since we are Hashem's children we should not deface our bodies.1 The Talmud teaches that there are three partners in the creation of a human being, the father, the mother and Hashem. Parents supply the child with physical characteristics and Hashem supplies the child with a soul.2 Why does the verse describe our relationship with Hashem as His children in the context of safeguarding our physical form?

From the expression "lo siggededu" the Talmud derives the prohibition against separate factions observing divergent Halachic practices within the same community ("aggudos" – "groups").3 Since the prohibitions against lacerating ourselves and having separate factions are both derived from the same expression, a unifying thread between them must exist. What do they have in common?

In the first paragraph of the Shema we are commanded to teach our children Torah, "veshinantam levanecha".4 Rashi comments that "your children" refers to "your students" for a person's students are considered as his children. To support this notion Rashi cites our verse in Parshas Re'eh, "banim atem laHashem" – "you are children to Hashem".5 How does this verse indicate that a person's students are his children? It is apparent from Rashi's comments that he understands that through the study of Hashem's Torah we become His students, and can therefore be referred to as His children.

The Mishna teaches that a person is obligated to return his teacher's lost object prior to returning an object lost by his father, for his father provides him with a finite existence while his teacher offers him an infinite existence.6 The Torah taught by his teacher not only guarantees the soul an

infinite existence, but also elevates the body given to him by his father from a physical and finite state to a spiritual and eternal state.

Although Hashem is clearly the source of the soul, Torah study enables the body to be perceived as a product of the same source. This message is punctuated by the commandment against lacerating our bodies because we are Hashem's children; through Torah study we become His students and thereby His children, body and soul. The reconciliation between body and soul is the ultimate proof that we emanate from one source. Since only the Torah is able to accomplish this reconciliation, it is of the utmost importance that the Torah itself be viewed as emanating from one source. Any action distorting this truth undermines the efficacy of the Torah to unite and reconcile all apparent divergent forces in creation. It is therefore self-evident that separate factions observing divergent Halachic practices within the same community cannot be tolerated.

1.14:1 2.Niddah 31a 3.Yevamos 13b 4.6:7 5.Ibid 6.Bava Metziah 33a

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by **Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein**

Why Preparation Is Essential for a Spiritual Experience

It's so interesting that preparation deepens an experience. But this applies particularly to deep and meaningful experiences. The truth is, an experience that is superficial is not enhanced by preparation; it can sometimes even be ruined by preparation. The more profound the experience, the more it is enhanced by preparation. And what could be a bigger experience than that of Rosh Hashana, the day of judgment for us and the entire world?

This Shabbos coincides with the beginning of the month of Elul, which is such an important month in the Jewish calendar. Elul is the month before Rosh Hashana - thus it is the month of preparation for Rosh Hashana, two days that are of the utmost significance and impact. These are the days of judgment and introspection, of reflection on the purpose of creation and the purpose of our lives. We cannot simply walk coldly into such an experience. We need to prepare. And that's what the month of Elul is about. It is a month of preparation before entering into Rosh Hashana, followed 10 days later by Yom Kippur. Elul is a time of preparation not just for Rosh Hashana, but for Yom Kippur as well, and for the 10 days in between.

Preparation is crucial to how our sages guide us to live a life of meaning. Living a life of goodness, in harmony with the will of Hashem, requires preparation. To live such a life means to live in a constant state of preparation - to live with mindfulness. We don't just rush through life oblivious to what is taking place; we carefully consider our purpose, and the general direction of our lives. We consider our actions and give genuine, deep thought to who we want to be and where we want to go.

In the Mesillat Yesharim, one of the classic works of spiritual development and growth, written by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, known as the Ramchal, he describes a ladder of ascending levels of spiritual achievement to help us to grow and become truly great people. The starting point of the ladder is what the Ramchal calls zehirut, which means living with self-awareness and mindfulness. The Ramchal quotes an image from Jeremiah the prophet, who talks about people living life "like a horse charging headlong into battle". The image is a powerful one. Think of horses in a cavalry charge, with no awareness of what is going on around them, but still rushing headlong because they are caught up in the frenzy of the moment. Rather, we should live with mindfulness, and Elul arrives as a reminder for us to return to this state of mindfulness - therefore, it is crucial in preparation for Rosh Hashana.

Mindfulness is about living with careful introspection and self-awareness of what we are doing, which enhances the spiritual experience of living like a

Jew. An example is saying the Shema, and praying. These are two important mitzvahs. In the Shema, we accept God as our King, and we can experience a moment of incredible closeness to God as we accept His authority in our lives. Prayer is a time when we pour out our hearts to God in a state of vulnerability and deep emotional connection to Him. These two mitzvahs are fulfilled when we say the Shema and the Amidah. But the siddur is structured in such a way that we don't just rush headlong into the Shema and Amidah. There is a process of preparation. First, we say the morning blessings, and then the special passages from the Book of Psalms and other places in the Tanach, which are filled with words of praise and reflection about God and His greatness. These pesukei dezimrah - the "verses of song" - prepare us for the climax of what is contained in the siddur in the form of the Shema and the Amidah.

We also prepare for Shabbos each week, not just practically, i.e. food and home preparation, but rather, we go through a process of mentally, emotionally and physically preparing ourselves to accept the holiness of the Shabbos experience, which is enhanced through our preparation. This is why the prayers that begin the Shabbos service, taken from the Book of Psalms, are called Kabbalat Shabbat, the receiving of the Shabbos. We don't just walk into Shabbos, we prepare to receive Shabbos.

One of the greatest mitzvahs of mindfulness is the mitzvah of learning Torah. Firstly, this mitzvah is preceded by blessings, where we acknowledge that God is the giver of the Torah - so we prepare ourselves for the experience of learning Torah. It is not merely a dry intellectual activity, but rather an experience of receiving the wisdom of Hashem in this world and appreciating the privilege of what that is and what that means. To divorce Torah from its Divine origins and just to experience it as one would experience any intellectual pursuit is to drain it of its holiness and its significance, and to severely limit its capacity to impact our lives. In fact, the Gemara says one of the reasons for the destruction of the Temple is that the Jews of the time did not say their blessings before learning Torah. They approached Torah with a lack of awe for its greatness.

As we approach Elul with awe, mindful and aware of the opportunity it gives us to prepare for Rosh Hashana, what should we be focusing on? Our sages teach us that the month of Elul corresponds to the verse from the Song of Songs: "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me." In Hebrew, the first letters of words of the verse: Ani ledodi v'dodi li make up the letters of Elul. So Elul is about our love for God and His love for us, and about our closeness to God. And an important part of the preparation of Elul is to feel that closeness to God.

Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv - the Alter of Kelm - links this to the famous prayer we say over Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur: Avinu Malkeinu - "Our Father, our King". First, God is our Father, and that represents the relationship of love, connection and bonding. And then He is our King who judges us. So before He is our King, He is our Father. The Alter of Kelm explains that before we can embrace the experience of being judged by God, we need to embrace the experience of being loved by God.

Whatever He does is ultimately because He loves us and because He wants the best for us. In the same way that a parent loves a child and only wants the best for a child, so too God loves us and wants what's best for us. We need to enter Rosh Hashana deeply connected to God's love for us and our love for God. Then the process of judgment, introspection and repentance can be so much more powerful. We also prepare for Rosh Hashana during the month of Elul by blowing the shofar. The shofar blowing, says the Rambam, is to "awaken those who sleep". We need to awaken ourselves spiritually, and this connects deeply with the idea of mindfulness and living with intent and heightened awareness. Habit is one of the most powerful forces in human life. This can be used for the good, because if we adopt good habits then they can be effortlessly implemented without us having to think about them. On the other hand, habit can lead us to living without intent. In preparation for Rosh Hashana, we need to step out of our habits and reconsider, look at everything afresh, renew ourselves and reawaken ourselves spiritually. The

message of the shofar sounded throughout the month of Elul is a reminder to prepare for Rosh Hashana. It is actually preparing us for the mindfulness with which we need to engage Rosh Hashana, and it's reminding us to live our lives with mindfulness, so it touches on both aspects.

Elul was the time, historically, when we were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf, which culminated in Moshe bringing down the second set of tablets from the mountain on Yom Kippur. It was a time of acceptance by God, a time of closeness to God, a time of opportunity and a time of preparation.

Our sages describe these days as *yemei ratzon* - "the days of acceptance". It is during this time that we are especially close to God and that our prayers, repentance and introspection are more easily accepted by God. In fact, the entire period, beginning with Rosh Chodesh Elul leading up to Yom Kippur, is a time of acceptance. So, as we take the time to carefully prepare for Rosh Hashana this year, let us be mindful of the fact that this is a time in which the gates of heaven are wide open for us, and let us use this opportunity to truly connect with and be embraced by Our Father, our King - Avinu

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from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Aug 29, 2019, 11:17 PM subject:

**Rabbi Yakov Haber –**

### **Free Choice and Seeking Out Hashem**

*Midrash Rabba* (4:3) comments on the opening verses of *parshas Re'eh* (*Devarim* 11:26-28) - "See I have placed before you today blessing and curse. The blessing if you hearken to the commandments of Hashem... And the curse, if you do not hearken to the commandments of Hashem...":  
א"ר הגי ולא עוד שנתתי לכם שני דרכים אלא שנכנסתי לפני משורת הדין ואמרתי לכם ובחרת בחיים.

R. Chaggai stated: No only have I placed two paths before you (*ibid.*), but I have gone way beyond (*lifnim mishuras hadin*) and have told you, "And you shall choose life!" (*ibid.* (*Nitzavim*) 30:19). R. Chaggai's meaning is unclear. Why was it in any way necessary for Hashem to tell us to choose life; isn't this the obvious choice? Does one need to be told not to swallow poison or not to jump off a roof? And if the world is structured in a way where the sanctified, moral lifestyle required by the Torah is not as obvious as the laws of nature, how does Hashem's telling us to choose life add anything over the original commandments themselves? Furthermore, why is Hashem's telling His nation to choose life considered "going beyond the letter of the law"? The commentaries on this *Midrash* offer different approaches to solve these apparent difficulties (see *Maharzu* and *Eshed Hanechalim*). Perhaps we can suggest another interpretation. Elsewhere, [1] we presented the approach of Rav Chaim Volozhiner (*Ruach Chaim*, *Avos* 4:2) that ultimately the human being, created *b'tselem Elokim*, containing a G-dly *neshama*, naturally would tend toward choosing the good, that which binds him to his source. It is only in order to allow for free-will that evil appears so attractive initially. However, this initial attractiveness is only superficial. The true inner dimension of the human personality wishes to choose only the good. Based on this, Rav Chaim explains the teaching of Ben Azzai (*ibid.*): "הוי רץ למצוה - run after *mitzvos* and flee from sin." This statement implies that initially sins pursue us and *mitzvos* flee from us. Doesn't this statement contradict the concept of free choice if the choices are not equally appealing? Rather, since the inner personality only craves the good, Hashem gave a "handicap" to sins initially to make them appear as if they are pursuing us and are more alluring; the opposite is true with respect to *mitzvos*. Rav Elchanan Wasserman *zt"l* (*Kovetz Ma'amarim*) presents a similar approach concerning true and false beliefs. The *neshama* and intellect have absolute clarity concerning fundamental *emunos*, but the *pasuk* teaches "כי השהוד יעור עיני הכמים" - bribery will blind the eyes of sages" (*Devarim* 16:19). This bribery takes the form of physical desires which even a child becomes accustomed to from birth when he learns to crave food. This approach can be extended to the drive for self-

aggrandizement as well as envy both of which cloud sound judgment. As stated by *Chazal* (*Avos* 4:21): "הקנאה, התאוה והכבוד מוציאים את האדם מן העולם". Rav Elchanan's approach, although initially applied to beliefs, can readily be extended to other sins. As *Chazal* tell us (*Sota* 3a), " אין אדם חוטא אלא אם נכנס " בו רוח שטות (irrational thought) overcomes him." Based on the above, we can suggest that the deeper meaning of R. Chaggai's statement is as follows. Hashem could have created a world in which the choice between good and evil was not in any way influenced by the inner personality. The total human personality could have been formed in a way where no fundamental aspect of it tended toward good or evil. However, this would lead to many more failures in the quest to achieve perfection and obey the Divine calling. In the Creator's mercy, He formed us, as mentioned above, whereby our most fundamental aspect of our existence, the *neshama*, strives only for good whereas evil is only alluring on the surface. Once we succeed in removing its false veneer, the reality of the absolute good of *avodas Hashem* emerges as having been within us all along. As an act of "going beyond", Hashem did not fashion us in a manner truly 50/50 in terms of the balance of good and evil. The evil side is only appealing on the surface; the good reverberates within our very essence. Thus, the chances of success are much greater. This is the Divine command of "Choose life"; it echoes and resonates within the inner self. [2] Similarly, the *Ba'al HaTanya* expounds at length upon the *ahava tiv'is*, the inherent love of G-d present in every Jew, and contrasts it with the *ahava sichlis*, the intellectual love arrived at through intense and sometimes tortuous study. The *ahava tiv'is* is not readily accessible but is always there ready to be awakened by the *ahava sichlis*. The sweet singer of Israel, King David, states in the Psalm recited traditionally in the upcoming month of Elul, "את לבי בקשו פני, את לך אמר לבי בקשו פני, את לך אמר לבי בקשו פני, את לך אמר לבי בקשו פני" - פניך ד' אבקש - to you (or "from you") my heart says 'seek my Presence!'. [Indeed], your Presence I shall seek" (*Tehillim* 27:8). On this verse, Rashi comments, " בשבילך בשליחותך אומר (לי) לבי בקשו כלכם ישראל את פני ואני שומע לו, " - because of you, as your agent, my heart says, 'seek my Presence - all of Israel' and I obey... in Your place [or "representing you"], my heart comes to me to say that." Although this Rashi has been interpreted in various ways, one prominent understanding corresponds to our above presentation. Our heart, our inner essence, demands of us to seek out G-d. It is not only the external Divine command heard at Sinai and echoing ever since that informs us of the true path, but it is our very essence which calls to us constantly, "Choose life!" [3] As we approach the preparatory month of Elul and begin to hear the sound of the *shofar*, let us hope that we listen not only to the external call of the *d'var* Hashem but connect to our very essence which constantly reinforces that same message.

[1] See [Y'fas Toar - Avoiding the Temptation of Sin](#). [2] See [Rav Schwab on Prayer](#) on the last blessing of *kerias shema* for other examples where the concept "the word of G-d" refers to some other means of communication other than direct Divine command. [3] For further expansions of the themes discussed herein, see [The Two Goats and the True Self](#) and [The Choice is Ours](#).

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Collective Joy Re'eh (Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17) Aug 25, 2019

by **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

If we were to ask what key word epitomises the society Jews were to make in the Promised Land, several concepts would come to mind: justice, compassion, reverence, respect, holiness, responsibility, dignity, loyalty. Surprisingly, though, another word figures centrally in Moses' speeches in Deuteronomy. It is a word that appears only once in each of the other books of the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. [1] Yet it appears

twelve times in Deuteronomy, seven of them in Parshat Re'eh. The word is simcha, joy.

It is an unexpected word. The story of the Israelites thus far has not been a joyous one. It has been marked by suffering on the one hand, rebellion and dissension on the other. Yet Moses makes it eminently clear that joy is what the life of faith in the land of promise is about. Here are the seven instances in this parsha, and their contexts:

1. The central Sanctuary, initially Shilo: "There in the presence of the Lord your God you and your families shall eat and rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you" (Deut. 12:7).

2. Jerusalem and the Temple: "And there you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns" (Deut. 12:12).

3. Sacred food that may be eaten only in Jerusalem: "Eat them in the presence of the Lord your God at the place the Lord your God will choose - you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns - and you are to rejoice before the Lord your God in everything you put your hand to" (Deut. 12:18).

4. The second tithe: "Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine, or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice" (Deut. 14:26).

5. The festival of Shavuot: "And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His name - you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows living among you" (Deut. 16:11).

6. The festival of Succot: "Be joyful at your feast - you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows who live in your towns" (Deut. 16:14).

7. Succot, again. "For seven days, celebrate the feast to the Lord your God at the place the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete [vehayita ach same'ach]" (Deut. 16:15).

Why does Moses emphasise joy specifically in the book of Deuteronomy? Perhaps because is there, in the speeches Moses delivered in the last month of his life, that he scaled the heights of prophetic vision never reached by anyone else before or since. It is as if, standing on a mountaintop, he sees the whole course of Jewish history unfold below him, and from that dizzying altitude he brings back a message to the people gathered around him: the next generation, the children of those he led out of Egypt, the people who will cross the Jordan he will not cross and enter the land he is only able to see from afar.

What he tells them is unexpected, counter-intuitive. In effect he says this: "You know what your parents suffered. You have heard about their slavery in Egypt. You yourselves have known what it is to wander in the wilderness without a home or shelter or security. You may think those were the greatest trials, but you are wrong. You are about to face a harder trial. The real test is security and contentment."

Absurd though this sounds, it has proved true throughout Jewish history. In the many centuries of dispersion and persecution, from the destruction of the Second Temple to the nineteenth century, no one raised doubts about Jewish continuity. They did not ask, "Will we have Jewish grandchildren?" Only since Jews achieved freedom and equality in the Diaspora and independence and sovereignty in the State of Israel has that question come to be asked. When Jews had little to thank God for, they thanked Him, prayed to Him, and came to the synagogue and the house of study to hear and heed His word. When they had everything to thank Him for, many turned their backs on the synagogue and the house of study.

Moses was giving prophetic expression to the great paradox of faith: It is easy to speak to God in tears. It is hard to serve God in joy. It is the warning

he delivered as the people came within sight of their destination: the Promised Land. Once there, they were in danger of forgetting that the land was theirs only because of God's promise to them, and only for as long as they remembered their promise to God.

Simcha is usually translated as joy, rejoicing, gladness, happiness, pleasure, or delight. In fact, simcha has a nuance untranslatable into English. Joy, happiness, pleasure, and the like are all states of mind, emotions. They belong to the individual. We can feel them alone. Simcha, by contrast, is not a private emotion. It means happiness shared. It is a social state, a predicate of "we," not "I." There is no such thing as feeling simcha alone.

Moses repeatedly labours the point. When you rejoice, he says time and again, it must be "you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows in your towns." A key theme of Parshat Re'eh is the idea of a central Sanctuary "in the place the Lord your God will choose." As we know from later Jewish history, during the reign of King David, this place was Jerusalem, where David's son Solomon eventually built the Temple. What Moses is articulating for the first time is the idea of simcha as communal, social, and national rejoicing. The nation was to be brought together not just by crisis, catastrophe, or impending war, but by collective celebration in the presence of God. The celebration itself was to be deeply moral. Not only was this a religious act of thanksgiving; it was also to be a form of social inclusion. No one was to be left out: not the stranger, or the servant, or the lonely (the orphan and widow). In a remarkable passage in the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides makes this point in the strongest possible terms:

And while one eats and drinks himself, it is his duty to feed the stranger, the orphan, the widow, and other poor and unfortunate people, for he who locks the doors to his courtyard and eats and drinks with his wife and family, without giving anything to eat and drink to the poor and the bitter in soul - his meal is not a rejoicing in a Divine commandment, but a rejoicing in his own stomach. It is of such persons that Scripture says, "Their sacrifices shall be to them as the bread of mourners, all that eat thereof shall be polluted; for their bread is a disgrace to their own appetite" (Hos. 9:4). Rejoicing of this kind is a disgrace to those who indulge in it, as Scripture says, "And I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your sacrifices" (Mal. 2:3).[2] Moses' insight remains valid today. The West is more affluent than any previous society has ever been. Our life expectancy is longer, our standards of living higher, and our choices wider than at any time since Homo sapiens first walked on earth. Yet Western societies are not measurably happier. The most telling indices of unhappiness - drug and alcohol abuse, depressive illness, stress-related syndromes, eating disorders, and the rest - have risen by between 300 and 1,000 per cent in the space of two generations. Why so?

In 1968 I met the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of blessed memory, for the first time. While I was there, the Chassidim told me the following story. A man had written to the Rebbe in roughly these terms: "I am depressed. I am lonely. I feel that life is meaningless. I try to pray, but the words do not come. I keep mitzvot but find no peace of mind. I need the Rebbe's help." The Rebbe sent a brilliant reply without using a single word. He simply circled the first word of every sentence and sent the letter back. The word in each case was "I." Our contemporary consumer is constructed in the first-person singular: I want, I need, I must have. There are many things we can achieve in the first-person singular but one we cannot, namely, simcha - because simcha is the joy we share, the joy we have only because we share. That, said Moses before the Israelites entered their land, would be their greatest challenge. Suffering, persecution, a common enemy, unite a people and turn it into a nation. But freedom, affluence, and security turn a nation into a collection of individuals, each pursuing his or her own happiness, often indifferent to the fate of those who have less, the lonely, the marginal, and the excluded. When that happens, societies start to disintegrate. At the height of their good fortune, the long slow process of decline begins.

The only way to avoid it, said Moses, is to share your happiness with others, and, in the midst of that collective, national celebration, serve God.[3] Blessings are not measured by how much we own or earn or spend or possess but by how much we share. Simcha is the mark of a sacred society. It is a place of collective joy.  
Shabbat Shalom.

#### NOTES

1. Gen. 31:27; Ex. 4:14; Lev. 23:40; Num. 10:10. 2. Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yom Tov 6:18. 3. The great French sociologist Émile Durkheim (whose father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all rabbis) argued, in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (trans. Karen E. Fields [New York: Free Press, 1995]), that religion is born in the experience of "collective effervescence," which is closely related to simcha in the biblical sense.

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from: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com> to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Aug 28, 2019, 11:07 AM

?Psalm 73: The Complacency of the Wicked

It is deeply disturbing when we see evil people succeed and prosper. "I envied the arrogant," the psalmist admits, "when I saw the tranquility of the wicked." Despite their deplorable lifestyle, they appear to live without worries.

They live their lives like reckless drivers, endangering others as they weave in and out of traffic at high speed, their car decals boasting, "No Fear!"

כי אין תרצבות למותם, ובריה אילם "There are no pangs (chartzubot) about their death; and their health (ulam) is sound." (Psalms 73:4) The meaning of the word chartzubot is not clear. The Talmud explains that char-tzuv is a composite word, combining the words chareid (to tremble) and atzuv (to grieve).

"Not only do the wicked fail to tremble and grieve about the day of death, but their hearts are as steady as an edifice (ulam)." (Shabbat 31b) Rav Kook noted that the Sages enumerated the two factors that will usually lead people - unless they are incorrigibly evil - to a higher awareness of their spiritual and moral side. The two factors are: (1) contemplation of death, and (2) the soul's innate moral compass and sensitivity.

#### Reflecting on Death

Those mired in materialistic values are unaware of the enormous loss when their soul disconnects from its true nature and fails to acquire the traits of holiness it was meant to attain.

Death frees the soul from the body's fetters and physical cravings. After death, the soul can strive to return to its pristine state; and it is painfully aware of its distance from its Source.

When we contemplate death, we are forced to confront the mortality of our bodies and the fleeting nature of worldly pleasures. Those who have lost their way should "tremble and grieve." They feel the pain of chartzubot.

While they may not fully recognize what they lack, having become alienated from a life of spiritual growth and holiness, they will nonetheless realize that these are life's most important acquisitions. They will regret failing to work toward life's most significant accomplishments and greatest satisfactions: perfecting the soul and strengthening its inner light.

The psalmist, however, is troubled by the phenomenon of people so enmeshed in evil that they fail to consider the ramifications of death. These complacent individuals are not bothered by the transient and superficial character of their lives. "There are no pangs about their death."

#### A Feeling Heart

The second wake-up call summons from the inner spirit. On occasion the soul makes its presence felt, and the heart awakens of its own accord. Those who have neglected their spiritual nature and forsaken the path of integrity will feel the biting sting of these pangs of conscience.

Yet some people are so thoroughly immersed in evil that they are immune to these stirrings of emotion. It is as if their hearts are covered with a thick layer of fat, preventing them from sensing the needs of others.

Not only do they refuse to consider the implications of death, but "their hearts are as steady as an edifice." Their hearts are numb and unfeeling, like concrete slabs of an inert building, oblivious to the harm they cause. With a blind arrogance, they live their self-centered lives without a thought as to the implications of their actions.

To protect us from this ailment of spiritual obtuseness, God provided us with a remedy: the Torah. The Torah and its mitzvot elevate all aspects of life, opening the path to be close to God, to be receptive to holy matters, pure thoughts and lofty feelings, to contemplate life and do good. The Torah protects us from wallowing in the mud-pit of materialistic cravings and self-absorption.

"God wanted to purify Israel, so He gave them Torah and commandments in abundance, as it says: 'God seeks [Israel's] righteousness, so He made the Torah great and glorious'" (Isaiah 42:21). (Makkot 23b) (Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III, 177-178)

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from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> date: Aug 28, 2019, 4:31 PM subject: Aish.com Parsha - Re'eh

Why Preparation Is Essential for a Spiritual Experience

Re'eh (Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17)

Aug 25, 2019

by **Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein**

Why Preparation Is Essential for a Spiritual Experience Click here to listen podcast version:

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It's so interesting that preparation deepens an experience. But this applies particularly to deep and meaningful experiences. The truth is, an experience that is superficial is not enhanced by preparation; it can sometimes even be ruined by preparation. The more profound the experience, the more it is enhanced by preparation. And what could be a bigger experience than that of Rosh Hashana, the day of judgment for us and the entire world?

This Shabbos coincides with the beginning of the month of Elul, which is such an important month in the Jewish calendar. Elul is the month before Rosh Hashana - thus it is the month of preparation for Rosh Hashana, two days that are of the utmost significance and impact. These are the days of judgment and introspection, of reflection on the purpose of creation and the purpose of our lives. We cannot simply walk coldly into such an experience. We need to prepare. And that's what the month of Elul is about. It is a month of preparation before entering into Rosh Hashana, followed 10 days later by Yom Kippur. Elul is a time of preparation not just for Rosh Hashana, but for Yom Kippur as well, and for the 10 days in between.

Preparation is crucial to how our sages guide us to live a life of meaning.

Living a life of goodness, in harmony with the will of Hashem, requires preparation. To live such a life means to live in a constant state of preparation - to live with mindfulness. We don't just rush through life oblivious to what is taking place; we carefully consider our purpose, and the general direction of our lives. We consider our actions and give genuine, deep thought to who we want to be and where we want to go.

In the *Mesillat Yesharim*, one of the classic works of spiritual development and growth, written by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, known as the Ramchal, he describes a ladder of ascending levels of spiritual achievement to help us to grow and become truly great people. The starting point of the ladder is what the Ramchal calls *zehirut*, which means living with self-awareness and mindfulness. The Ramchal quotes an image from Jeremiah the prophet, who talks about people living life "like a horse charging headlong into battle". The image is a powerful one. Think of horses in a cavalry charge, with no awareness of what is going on around them, but still rushing

headlong because they are caught up in the frenzy of the moment. Rather, we should live with mindfulness, and Elul arrives as a reminder for us to return to this state of mindfulness - therefore, it is crucial in preparation for Rosh Hashana.

Mindfulness is about living with careful introspection and self-awareness of what we are doing, which enhances the spiritual experience of living like a Jew. An example is saying the Shema, and praying. These are two important mitzvahs. In the Shema, we accept God as our King, and we can experience a moment of incredible closeness to God as we accept His authority in our lives. Prayer is a time when we pour out our hearts to God in a state of vulnerability and deep emotional connection to Him. These two mitzvahs are fulfilled when we say the Shema and the Amidah. But the siddur is structured in such a way that we don't just rush headlong into the Shema and Amidah. There is a process of preparation. First, we say the morning blessings, and then the special passages from the Book of Psalms and other places in the Tanach, which are filled with words of praise and reflection about God and His greatness. These pesukei dezimrah - the "verses of song" - prepare us for the climax of what is contained in the siddur in the form of the Shema and the Amidah.

We also prepare for Shabbos each week, not just practically, i.e. food and home preparation, but rather, we go through a process of mentally, emotionally and physically preparing ourselves to accept the holiness of the Shabbos experience, which is enhanced through our preparation. This is why the prayers that begin the Shabbos service, taken from the Book of Psalms, are called Kabbalat Shabbat, the receiving of the Shabbos. We don't just walk into Shabbos, we prepare to receive Shabbos.

One of the greatest mitzvahs of mindfulness is the mitzvah of learning Torah. Firstly, this mitzvah is preceded by blessings, where we acknowledge that God is the giver of the Torah - so we prepare ourselves for the experience of learning Torah. It is not merely a dry intellectual activity, but rather an experience of receiving the wisdom of Hashem in this world and appreciating the privilege of what that is and what that means. To divorce Torah from its Divine origins and just to experience it as one would experience any intellectual pursuit is to drain it of its holiness and its significance, and to severely limit its capacity to impact our lives. In fact, the Gemara says one of the reasons for the destruction of the Temple is that the Jews of the time did not say their blessings before learning Torah. They approached Torah with a lack of awe for its greatness.

As we approach Elul with awe, mindful and aware of the opportunity it gives us to prepare for Rosh Hashana, what should we be focusing on? Our sages teach us that the month of Elul corresponds to the verse from the Song of Songs: "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me." In Hebrew, the first letters of words of the verse: Ani ledodi v'dodi li make up the letters of Elul. So Elul is about our love for God and His love for us, and about our closeness to God. And an important part of the preparation of Elul is to feel that closeness to God.

Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv - the Alter of Kelm - links this to the famous prayer we say over Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur: Avinu Malkeinu - "Our Father, our King". First, God is our Father, and that represents the relationship of love, connection and bonding. And then He is our King who judges us. So before He is our King, He is our Father. The Alter of Kelm explains that before we can embrace the experience of being judged by God, we need to embrace the experience of being loved by God.

Whatever He does is ultimately because He loves us and because He wants the best for us. In the same way that a parent loves a child and only wants the best for a child, so too God loves us and wants what's best for us. We need to enter Rosh Hashana deeply connected to God's love for us and our love for God. Then the process of judgment, introspection and repentance can be so much more powerful. We also prepare for Rosh Hashana during the month of Elul by blowing the shofar. The shofar blowing, says the Rambam, is to "awaken those who sleep". We need to awaken ourselves spiritually, and this connects deeply with the idea of mindfulness and living with intent and

heightened awareness. Habit is one of the most powerful forces in human life. This can be used for the good, because if we adopt good habits then they can be effortlessly implemented without us having to think about them. On the other hand, habit can lead us to living without intent. In preparation for Rosh Hashana, we need to step out of our habits and reconsider, look at everything afresh, renew ourselves and reawaken ourselves spiritually. The message of the shofar sounded throughout the month of Elul is a reminder to prepare for Rosh Hashana. It is actually preparing us for the mindfulness with which we need to engage Rosh Hashana, and it's reminding us to live our lives with mindfulness, so it touches on both aspects.

Elul was the time, historically, when we were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf, which culminated in Moshe bringing down the second set of tablets from the mountain on Yom Kippur. It was a time of acceptance by God, a time of closeness to God, a time of opportunity and a time of preparation.

Our sages describe these days as yemei ratzon - "the days of acceptance". It is during this time that we are especially close to God and that our prayers, repentance and introspection are more easily accepted by God. In fact, the entire period, beginning with Rosh Chodesh Elul leading up to Yom Kippur, is a time of acceptance. So, as we take the time to carefully prepare for Rosh Hashana this year, let us be mindful of the fact that this is a time in which the gates of heaven are wide open for us, and let us use this opportunity to truly connect with and be embraced by Our Father, our King - Avinu

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from: Rabbi Berel Wein <genesis@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Aug 29, 2019, 5:16 PM subject: Rabbi Wein - Choosing Life - Not As Easy as it Looks

By **Rabbi Berel Wein**

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya Parshas Reeh Choosing Life - Not As Easy as it Looks

The Torah presents us with a seemingly simple and uncomplicated choice in this week's reading - the choice between life and death. And the Torah deems it necessary to instruct us to choose life. It certainly seems at first glance to be a very superfluous instruction, for the instinct to preserve our lives for as long as possible is one of the basic drives of human beings. An equal part of our nature is that we are shortsighted and give in today foolishly against our own interests and our own life force itself.

There is no other explanation for why alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs should exist in our society, allowing for hundreds of thousands of lives every year to be summarily wasted. Choosing life has many nuances attached to it. People who are determined to enjoy pleasures of the flesh, to satisfy wanton desires, and to pursue temporary pleasures regardless of the long-term costs and consequences also think that they are somehow choosing life and its pleasures. One of the great catchphrases that exist in our current society is quality of life. Like all catchphrases and currently socially acceptable mantras and mottos there is no way to define this term. No one can measure accurately what life means to any individual person and quality of life is certainly not given to measurement by any objective standards.

The whole tragedy of eugenics and biological selection that was so common in the 20th century is based upon the fact that somehow someone with superior intelligence can measure what quality of life means to a given individual. And, if those given individuals do not measure up to those elitist standards, then this becomes preferable to life. The twentieth century is littered with millions of corpses who were victims of such false and murderous thoughts and policies.

To put it bluntly, the Torah is very much pro-life. It is pro-life before we are born, while we are alive, and after the physical body has returned to the dust from which it was created. That is why the Torah emphasizes that we should choose life and not give in to the specious theories and quality-of-life fictions and conveniences. Our mere existence as human beings presents us

with difficult choices at every stage of our lives. It is never quite as easy as the verse in the Torah may indicate at first glance. Because life is not always convenient or even pleasant, it requires sacrifice, postponement of pleasure and a long view of the consequences of our actions and behavior. As such, choices for life are always made in a gray area and are not generally as black and white as we would wish them to be. The Torah comes to help guide us through this unclear and muddled situation that we call society. It comes to establish the rules by which we would always be wise enough to choose life and avoid the pitfalls of fads, desires and foolishness that can only lead to the loss of life, qualitatively and quantitatively.

Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

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from: Chabad.org <[learntorah@chabad.org](mailto:learntorah@chabad.org)> date: Aug 29, 2019, 12:10 PM  
subject: TORAH STUDIES: Parshat Re'eh

Re'eh

**Adapted by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

The following Sicha illustrates in a striking way an important truth about the nature of Chassidic thought. Chassidut is not simply one amongst many of the branches of Jewish thinking. It is not separate from or merely supplementary to the “revealed” facet of Torah—halachic or legal reasoning. Instead, it lies at the heart of the other branches of Torah, shedding light on them all. In this way, pursuing an apparently minor halachic problem, we may travel deeper and deeper until we arrive, unexpectedly, and yet inevitably, at a fundamental Chassidic truth. In this case the problem concerns the law of a city led into idolatry—one of the subjects of the Sidra of Re’eh. One difficulty that confronts us immediately is the way in which even innocent people seem to be involved in the collective guilt and punishment of the city. The other is that Rambam rules that if the city repents of its sin, this collective guilt is averted. And yet there is a principle in Judaism that repentance cannot save a man from human judgment, only from Divine retribution. Rambam’s ruling is the only exception to this principle. What grounds did he have for making it? In working towards an answer we find ourselves led ultimately to an inward truth about the Jewish soul, its unity and its spiritual power.

**1. The Idolatrous City**

The Sidra of Re’eh contains the laws which were to apply in the Holy Land to a city tainted with idolatry:

“If you shall hear in one of your cities, which the L-rd your G-d has given you to abide there, saying: Certain men, worthless persons, are gone out from among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods which you have not known.’ Then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently, and behold, if it be truth and the thing certain.... You shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. And you shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its

broad place and shall burn the city and all its spoil with fire unto the L-rd your G-d, and it shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again.”<sup>1</sup> This Sidra is always read on the Shabbat when we bless the coming month of Elul, or on the New Moon itself.

Elul, the month of Divine mercy and forgiveness, is dominated by the idea of teshuvah,<sup>2</sup> “returning” to G-d and away from sin. Thus we find in Re’eh an unprecedented statement of the power and scope of teshuvah.

As a general rule, the act of repenting and “returning” to G-d affects only Divine justice, not the rulings of a human court. The principle is stated in the Talmud:<sup>3</sup> “Those who were liable to karet (death by the hand of heaven)... if they repent, the Heavenly Tribunal pardons them. But those who have become liable to death by the sentence of a (human) court... even if they should repent, the Earthly Tribunal can not pardon them.” The same applies to lesser punishments: Repentance does not affect the sentence of a human court. The reason is that teshuvah is a change of heart<sup>4</sup> and so it lies outside the consideration of human judges who can deal only with visible, objective fact.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, in the ruling of Rambam,<sup>6</sup> the punishments to which a city led into idolatry is liable—the smiting of its inhabitants, the burning of its spoil—are averted if the people repent of their collective sin. This is a unique instance of repentance affecting the ruling of a human court.

Rambam’s ruling has been explained by one of his commentators, the Kesef Mishneh, in this way: To become liable for the death sentence an individual must be warned that the act he is about to commit is a capital offense. But in the case of an idolatrous city, the warning about its conduct is collective, addressed to the people as a whole. Therefore the normal requirement of individual caution is not present, and therefore, repentance averts the punishment.

However this explanation seems to miss the central point. What prevents repentance from affecting a human court’s verdicts has nothing to do with warning, but with the fact that men cannot see into men’s hearts to know whether an expression of repentance is sincere or not. Why should this principle not apply in the present case, the idolatrous city? Why should repentance be effective in just this instance? Besides, Rambam’s point is that in this case the people concerned were liable to punishment, and only afterwards won their pardon by repentance.

**2. Collective and Individual Responsibility**

The Rogotchover Rav<sup>7</sup> explains Rambam’s statement in a different way. According to him, Rambam does not maintain that repentance brings universal pardon; but that it changes collective guilt into individual guilt. The law of an idolatrous city involves collective liability. Even the innocent members of idol-serving families, even the property of the righteous men who live in the town, come under its penalties.<sup>8</sup> But if the inhabitants repent of their deeds, they become judged as individuals. No one who is personally innocent suffers. But the idol-worshippers are punished, and repentance does not alter their sentence.

But, again, this leaves the central difficulty unsolved. Repentance is something that happens after the act. It follows therefore that between the act and the repentance there is a period when the collective liability of the inhabitants is in force. How can a redirection of the heart, something that no human judge can assess, have the retroactive effect of mitigating a liability or softening a verdict?

**3. The Destruction of Sodom**

What is the Scriptural basis for Rambam’s ruling? The Rogotchover Rav suggests that it lies in the destruction of Sodom, the city which had been led into idolatry. Before sending His punishment G-d says, “I will go down now and see if they have done according to the cry of it.”<sup>9</sup> This cannot mean straightforwardly that an omniscient G-d needed to establish what He had heard by hearsay. Instead it has been taken to mean that G-d would see whether they had repented, and, in the reading of the Targum,<sup>10</sup> “If they have repented I will not punish them.”

This is certainly an instance of an idolatrous city given the chance to gain pardon by repentance. But one fact which prevents it from being the precedent on which Rambam bases his views is that it happened before Sinai, before the Giving of the Torah. And there is a general principle that “we do not derive laws on the basis of events before the Giving of the Torah.”<sup>11</sup> Also, Sodom was punished by the Heavenly Tribunal.

#### 4. A Group and a Community

There is one further difficulty in understanding the position of an idolatrous city.

There is more than one kind of death sentence in Jewish law, and there is a rule that if a man is liable to death in two different ways for two separate crimes, he is condemned to the more severe or painful of the two.<sup>12</sup>

But in the case of the idolatrous city, they are liable to the collective sentence of a relatively painless death; whereas each as an individual idolater would be liable to a more severe punishment (stoning). Yet the more lenient one prevails.<sup>13</sup>

The problem can be put more forcefully. Until the majority of the town worships idols, the collective sin does not apply. Each idolater is guilty only of his personal wrongdoing, and hence liable to a severe death sentence. But when that last person who turns a minority into a majority commits the sin, he brings the whole town into the category of an idolatrous city, and hence to a more lenient punishment. How can this one extra act of the sinner have the effect of softening the liability which already applied to the others?

We are forced to conclude that this point—where the majority of the town becomes idol-worshippers—creates a whole new entity, a collectivity, a community of sin. It ceases to be, legally, a group comprised of individuals, and becomes instead one unity. So it is not that their individual liability is lessened at this point, but that it ceases to apply, and a new situation is created, where all are judged as one.

This is why the punishment for an idolatrous city is so extensive, applying even to innocent members of idol-worshipping families (unless they fled to another city), and to the property of the righteous minority. For although individually they may be blameless, they are nonetheless a part of the whole, the community which is judged as if it were a single entity.

And this is why Rambam is able to take as his precedent the case of Sodom, even though it occurred before Sinai. For what he wishes to derive is not a legal point but a conceptual one, namely, the difference between a group of individuals and a community. Even though this distinction has legal consequences, it is not in itself a point of law, and it may therefore be learned from events which preceded Sinai.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, we can see how repentance—on the interpretation of the Rogotchover Rav—has the power to annul collective responsibility and leave only individual guilt to be punished. For teshuvah has indeed no power to affect the sentence of a human court. But we are not concerned here with a matter of law but of fact, namely, do the idolaters form a unity or are they to be treated as separate individuals? And this—which is not a question of how the law is to be applied but of which law is to be applied—can be affected by repentance. Repentance does not alter the punishment so much as change the facts of the case.

#### 5. The Unity of the Jewish Soul

Yet we have not yet solved our problem, only shifted its emphasis. Human judges can deal only with what they know, not with the feelings of other men’s hearts. If repentance alters the facts of the case how can judges establish what are the facts, how can they distinguish real from insincere teshuvah?

We need to go deeper and understand the inner meaning of the principle that a human court can not pardon on the grounds that a guilty person has repented.

The inner reason is, that what is handed over to human jurisdiction are actions whose wrongness is independent of the heart. Therefore, subsequent remorse cannot set them right. But the wrong done by an idolatrous city is

different. It is essentially related to the inner feelings of the idolaters; and so, it is something that a change of heart can effect.

The explanation is this:

The Jewish people are capable of a special kind of unity, an essential oneness, because their souls have their source in G-d who is the ultimate Unity. And even though this is a spiritual unity, it creates in addition a physical unity: “Who is like Your people Israel, one nation on the earth? It is this unity which finds its expression in the law of an idolatrous city where the oneness of the community creates a collective liability so strong as to implicate even the property of the city. But this seems strange. Idolatry is the very opposite of G-d’s will and unity. It wraps the soul in darkness and division. How, then, can it manifest such a oneness?

But there is no paradox. It is precisely because the Jewish soul is a part of G-d that its freewill has no limits; that a Jew can move so far from his true nature as to serve idols and deny his faith.<sup>15</sup> Even in this gravest of transgressions the special character of his soul and its power of oneness is manifest.

In all other wrongs that a Jew may commit and be judged by a court of fellow-Jews, there are two distinct harms that he must remedy: The wrong he has inflicted on his soul, and the damage he has caused to the world. Repentance sets right the first; punishment, the second. The two are separate and the one cannot alter the need for the other.

But the whole nature of the idolatrous town is its collective involvement which implicates even innocent inhabitants, even inanimate property. This unity is a spiritual unity; the wrong is a spiritual wrong; and the remedy is a spiritual one—repentance. Punishment is a remedy for harm done to the world. But the “world” of the idolatrous town—neighbors, cattle, property—is entirely assimilated to the oneness of the souls of its inhabitants. It has become totally subordinate to the spirituality, even in transgression. And this is why here and only here, in a township that has ceased to be a group of individuals and become a community, that repentance even heals with regard to the jurisdiction of man.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. IX pp. 106-114)

FOOTNOTES 1. Devarim 13:13-17. 2. Cf. e.g., Tur, Orach Chayim, ch. 581. 3. Makkot, 13b. 4. Tanya, Part I, ch. 29. 5. Cf. Noda Biyehudah, Orach Chayim, Mahadura Kama, ch. 35. 6. Hilchot Akum, 4:6. 7. Tzofnat Paaneach, Vayera, p. 74. 8. Rambam, Ibid., 4:6-7. 9. Bereishit 18:21. 10. Onkelos, ad loc. 11. Jerusalem Talmud, Moed Katan, 3:5. (Quoted in Tosefot, Moed Katan, 20a.) 12. Sanhedrin, 81b; Rambam, Hilchot Sanhedrin, 14:4. 13. Sanhedrin, 111b; Rambam, Hilchot Akum, 4:1-2. 14. Cf. Encyclopaedia Talmudit, on the concept “Ein Lemedin Mikodem Mattan Torah.” 15. Cf. Likkutei Torah, Emor, 38b, Tanya, Part I, end of ch. 18. Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah, beg. ch. 5.