

בשבת



אור ישראל

Self Inspired

PARSHAS
ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM

BY RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN
RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

CLEANING UP THE MESS

Parshas Acharei Mos introduces the *avodah* of one of the most important days of the year, *Yom Kippur*. When we had a *Beis HaMikdash*, the *Kohein Gadol* would perform the day's service, including going into the holiest part of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the *Kodesh HaKedoshim*.

Despite the loss of the *Beis HaMikdash*, *Yom Kippur* remains the Day of Atonement, a day spent in *tefillah* and *teshuvah*, a time to reflect and change our course.

The Torah describes this holy day as a day Hashem will forgive and purify us.¹

R' Gedaliah Schorr² (1910–1979) questions the dual language, 'forgive,' and 'purify.' What are these two words referencing, and what is the process that one goes through on *Yom Kippur*?

R' Schorr explains that 'forgive' is exactly what one would have thought. When one sins, justice demands retribution. Yet, Hashem is merciful and allows one to repent. The process of atonement removes those repercussions, and that is what we call forgiveness.

However, there is another consequence of sin. The grime and stain on one's soul and the fact that one's innocence is lost. Though one may be forgiven, how can one ever reclaim that pristine state of purity? Thus, Hashem says that *Yom Kippur* will 'purify' one's soul, restoring one's relationship with Hashem, and healing the rift that was created.

However, based on the *Gemara* in *Yoma*,³ R' Schorr points out that although forgiveness is from Hashem, the person must act to achieve the original state of purity. If a person were to do *teshuvah*, and truly do what they can to undo the sin, Hashem will give them the purity that they seek.

A person may rationalize their *aveiros* — "Hashem is forgiving,"⁴ or, "The punishment won't happen to me, it will happen to my soul."⁵ These arguments are terribly erroneous, but they are also missing a very basic point. What about the relationship to Hashem? What about the innocence? This *aveirah* will stain both, and it will be up to us to do what we can to regain that purity.

1 *Vayikra* 16:30

2 *Ohr Gedaliyahu* on *Moadim*, pg. 24

3 85b

4 *Bava Kamma* 50a

5 *Ohr Yisrael*, Letter 7

Though one may be forgiven, how can one ever reclaim that pristine state of purity?

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We may know that there will be recompense for the *aveiros* that we do, but it is hard to relate to this idea. The time of our judgement seems so far off in the first place, and either way, people generally don't like to think of this time.

With this in mind, what strategy can one employ to inspire oneself to refrain from *aveiros*?

It is one thing to try to use a far-off consequence to quell one's desire for sin, but it is quite another when we realize the effect is immediate, sometimes instantaneous.

Our relationship with Hashem is real, and we will feel that shame in our souls, knowing that we messed up.

Additionally, there are times when we truly lose our innocence by acting in a certain way, or experiencing something that we should have avoided. Why would we want to do that to ourselves?

By realizing the consequences are real and immediate,¹ we will be better equipped to avoid the proverbial stumbling block.

1 *Chidushei HaLev* on *Bereishis* 3:7

Have you thought about sponsoring Beshivticha?

Sponsor in honor, or in the merit of a loved one!

To sponsor, or receive by email, please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW

“
Have you ever seen such a thing,
great rabbonim learning in a kollel
as if they were young men? It is only
possible through the study of mussar! -

The Alter of Slobodka to R' Meir Chodosh,
She'ifus pg. 150

AN APOLOGY AND A CHOCOLATE

"Give it time, I'm sure things will change." My father* nodded, agreeing with his own sagacious advice.

"How can you be so sure? And even if it does, what about right now? I can't do it, I'm not going to class."

This must have been the tenth time I was having this conversation with my father. I was having trouble with a fellow in my class, and it was really getting to me. It came to the point where I didn't feel comfortable even sitting in the same room.

To be clear, this fellow wasn't bullying me. Not at all, he was actually a soft-spoken guy, and didn't really interact with others much. Which is why I was so taken aback and hurt when he blew up at me.

I didn't think I was doing something so bad, I was just making a lot of noise in the library when we were supposed to be studying. I probably shouldn't have done that, but that was no justification for his angry words at me. Right?

And then there was the time I almost knocked him over when I was trying to get my coat from the closet. I just didn't see him, I wouldn't just march into a human being on purpose! But the way he carried on, you would think I had attempted to trample him like some sort of human hit-and-run. Which it was, I guess. But I didn't think it was such a big deal.

Either way, I apologized. But still... there was definitely a chill in the air when we were together. And this was after he told me he forgave me. And warned me not to do it again — which I haven't!

And here we were, I felt very uneasy around him, and I just didn't know what to do. So I asked my father. So far, I wasn't convinced that his advice would work. My father suggested I apologize (already did) give it time (can't speed that up) and in the meantime, go out of my way to be extra nice to this fellow (it's hard enough as it is!).

With nothing to lose except my dignity, I followed through on my father's instructions, and brought a chocolate bar to share the next day. You should have seen his face, he looked around as if all of my friend's were going to pop out and yell, "Gotcha!" But we shared it, and talked about nothing important, and that was that.

Well, what do you know? Over time, not only did our relationship thaw, but we became very good friends. I guess my father was right; apologizing was only the first step.

**Based on a true story.*

I probably shouldn't have done that, but that was no justification for his angry words at me. Right?

DID YOU KNOW?

- When we repent, Hashem Himself washes away the filth and grime created by sin.¹
- Because the penitent must work hard to restore their original state, they are considered much greater than those who were never tempted in the first place.²

¹ *Tomer Devorah*, Chap. 1

² *Beis Elokim*, Gate of Repentance, Chap. 4

info@ohr-yisrael.com

Ohr Yisrael is a global initiative seeking to energize, enlighten, and empower Klal Yisrael to make lasting personal change, using the profound systems and guidance that have been crystallized and in the classic Sifrei Mussar, presented in the language of today.