

Laws of Repentance, Chapter 2 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Lecture on Laws of Repentance Chapter 2

General Introduction: The Structure from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2

Rambam's Structure: Chapter 1 dealt with **the mitzvah of teshuva** — vidui (confession), atonement, divisions of atonement, when one must say vidui, when atonement occurs. Chapter 2 proceeds to explain **what is true teshuva** — the reality of teshuva.

Novel Points:

1. **The distinction between "mitzvat teshuva" and "metziut hateshuva":** Chapter 1 dealt with **olam hama'aseh** — the practical laws. Chapter 2 enters into **the essence, the essential foundation of teshuva** — the "philosophical idea." If teshuva were not a mitzvah, but rather a reality — what would that mean? This is the subject of Chapter 2.

2. **Leniency or stringency?** One can read Chapter 2 in two ways: (a) **Leniency** — teshuva gemurah is a weaker requirement than Chapter 1, because here vidui is not even mentioned, only ceasing to sin; (b) **Stringency** — teshuva gemurah is a **higher level**, because in Chapter 1 we spoke of Yom Kippur teshuva where people fall again, and here we speak of one who has truly overcome his nature.

3. **The Chatam Sofer's approach:** The Chatam Sofer says that "teshuva gemurah" in Chapter 2 has a **practical halachic consequence** — for example, a rasha dechamass is invalid as a witness, and vidui alone does not help restore him to validity as a witness. Therefore one needs **teshuva gemurah** — one must see that he is no longer such a rasha (for example, returning a lost object in a significant matter). But this is not exactly the same as here, because **there it concerns how the beit din should know, and here we speak of an obligation before Heaven.**

Law 1 — What is Teshuva Gemurah

Rambam's words: "What is teshuva gemurah? When one encounters the same situation in which he sinned, and it is possible for him to do it, but he separates himself and does not do it because of teshuva, not from fear and not from weakness of strength. How so? Behold one who had relations with a woman in sin, and after a time he was secluded with her, and he still loves her and has physical strength and is in the same country where he sinned, but he separates himself and does not sin — this is a ba'al teshuva gemurah."

Simple meaning: Teshuva gemurah is when the same test comes again, he has the ability to sin, but he restrains himself

— not from fear, not from weakness — but because he has done teshuva.

Novel Points:

1. **The example of "ba'al isha ba'aveira" — question about yichud:** The Rambam brings this example: "nityached imah" — he is again alone with her. **Yichud itself is a sin** — yichud means being in a situation where one can sin. How can the Rambam bring an example of teshuva gemurah where he transgresses another prohibition? The answer: The Rambam is not speaking about the prohibition of yichud itself, but about the fact that he has **again the opportunity** to sin with her.

2. **Simple meaning of "nityached imah":** "Nityached imah" means he was actually secluded. **Even if he still has the weakness that he still associates with the woman** (i.e., he has not completely stopped associating), **but he restrained himself from the actual sin — this is already teshuva gemurah.** The ideal way would be to completely refrain, but the Rambam says that **even so it is teshuva gemurah.**

3. **The example of an alcoholic:** A normal person can drink in moderation. An alcoholic can make a vow not to drink at all — this is **not teshuva gemurah**, this is only fleeing from the test. **Teshuva gemurah** is when he still loves wine, but he has learned to drink in moderation — he has control over himself. The Rambam means: not fleeing from the test, but **overcoming the test.**

4. **Yichud as a fence in itself:** Yichud is a **fence for sins** — a sin in itself, but also a safeguard. One who restrained himself from the actual sin but not from yichud — **he is not a complete ba'al teshuva on all mitzvot, but he is indeed a ba'al teshuva gemurah on the actual sin.** He is a great tzaddik in this respect, although he still has a weakness in yichud.

5. **The Amshinover Rebbe's novel point about pgam habit:** People who struggle with sins of pgam habit — **every day they restrain themselves is essentially teshuva gemurah**, because the test is from themselves (not dependent on another person), and they are constantly in this test. **They don't even need to make any tikkunim** (which are spoken of for one who does not have teshuva gemurah) — if they are in the same situation and restrain themselves, this is teshuva gemurah. Even if they install a filter (on the internet, etc.) — this is already **refraining from sin on another level**, but even without this, if they restrain themselves — this is teshuva gemurah.

Law 1 (continued) — Teshuva in Old Age

Rambam's words: "And if one does not repent until his old age, at a time when it is impossible for him to do what he used to do, even though it is not teshuva me'ulah — it is effective for him and he is a ba'al teshuva."

Simple meaning: If one does teshuva only when he is old and can no longer sin — it is not teshuva me'ulah, but it is indeed good and he is called a ba'al teshuva.

Novel Points:

1. **"Me'ulah" vs. "gemurah":** The Rambam uses here the language **"it is not teshuva me'ulah"** — not "gemurah." This shows that "gemurah" means an important, excellent teshuva, but even without this — **in practice it is good, he is called a ba'al teshuva.**

2. **The verse "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (Kohelet 12:1):** The Rambam interprets: Do teshuva when you are still young, because **then is the proof that you still have the strength and you could still have sinned.** If there come already "the evil days" — the older years when one no longer has desire (chefetz) — one cannot say this is true teshuva.

3. **Teshuva of a dying person — regret without a future:** When one knows he is going to die, what does it mean to say "I will not return to this sin ever"? He is going to die! The answer: **Regret has value in itself** — regret is not only a preface to "I will not sin again," but it is an essential teshuva. This is a novel point in the nature of regret.

Law 1 (continued) — Even if He Sinned All His Days and Did Teshuva on the Day of His Death

Rambam's words: "Even if he sinned all his days and did teshuva on the day of his death... all his sins are forgiven."

Simple meaning: Even one who sinned his entire life and does teshuva on the day of his death, all his sins are forgiven.

Novel Points:

1. **Question about teshuva on the day of death:** How can one speak of "he will not sin again" when he is going to die? He has no choice at all! The answer: The essence is not the practical result, but that he has true regret and he truly becomes a better person internally. The will to sin is itself still somewhat of a sin — if he would also cast that away, this is true teshuva.

2. **Problem of revival:** What would happen if the doctor tells him he is actually healthy — would he return to his sins? The example is brought of Dostoevsky, who stood before a firing squad and it fundamentally changed his life — when a person sees death before his eyes, it can bring a deeper teshuva, not just "anyway I'm dying." There are both types of people — those who remain with their teshuva after being saved, and those who do not.

3. **Teshuva from fear vs. true teshuva on the day of death:** If the teshuva on the day of death is only from fear (fear of punishment), it is not teshuva me'ulah/gemurah. We speak here of one who made a deep contemplation and truly became a better person.

4. **Verse "before the sun sets":** The verse "and the light and the moon and the stars and the clouds return after the rain" is interpreted about the day of death — when everything becomes dark for the person. From here we learn that a person should do teshuva before his death, and therefore the Sages say "repent one day before your death" — because one does not know when one will die, one must do teshuva every day.

Law 2 — What is Teshuva (Elements of Teshuva)

Rambam's words: "And what is teshuva? That the sinner abandon his sin, and remove it from his thoughts, and resolve in his heart not to do it again... as it says 'let the wicked abandon his way and the man of iniquity his thoughts'... and likewise regret the past... and call upon the Knower of secrets to testify that he will never return to this sin."

Simple meaning: Teshuva consists of: (a) abandoning the sin, (b) removing from thought, (c) resolving in the heart not to do it again, (d) regret for the past, (e) making the Almighty as witness that he will not return.

Novel Points:

1. **The difference between teshuva gemurah (Law 1) and plain teshuva (Law 2):** Earlier the Rambam spoke of teshuva gemurah — when one comes to the same situation and is not nichshal. Here he speaks of plain teshuva — what are the elements of teshuva? This is essentially an explanation of "the inner dimension of vidui" — what does the vidui mentioned in Chapter 1 mean.

2. **"Remove it from his thoughts" — not with his thought, but from his thought:** He does not remove the sin with his thought (because he will remember), but he removes the sin **from** his thought — this means he removes the "excitement," the plan, the positive view of the sin. "Machshava" in Hebrew means a plan ("choshev machshavot"), not just a thought. He removes the plan to sin again.

3. **Novel point in the order: first "remove it from his thoughts" and then "regret the past":** The Rambam places regret for the past **after** removing from thought. The simple meaning: As long as a person still views the sin as a good thing — when he thinks of it he has good feelings, he is happy how good it was — this thinking itself is a sin. For example, one who transgressed with a married woman, and every time he thinks of it he is seized with desire — this thinking itself is a sin. Only after he has already "removed it from his thoughts" — he no longer has a plan, he no longer views the sin as something positive — only then can he have true regret "for the past." Because now it is truly only a thing of the past, no longer a thing of the present or future.

4. **The precision in "she'avar":** The Rambam specifically expresses "for the past" — because as long as a person is still "stuck" in sin, the sin is past, present, and future all at once. Every time he thinks, he thinks how good it was and how good it will be again. Only after he has already "removed it from his thoughts" for the future, only then is it truly only "she'avar" — a thing of the past.

5. **Verse "after my returning I regretted" (Yirmiyahu 31):** "After my returning" — after I did teshuva (= abandoning the sin), "I regretted" — I had regret for the past. This supports the Rambam's order: first abandonment, then regret. "After my knowing" — after I became aware of my sin, "I slapped my thigh" — I struck my hand in pain. **Question:** If "shubi" already means teshuva, what does "nichamti" mean afterward? **Answer:** "Shubi" means the first step — abandoning the sin, and "nichamti" is the second step — regret for the past.

6. **"And call upon the Knower of secrets to testify" — the simple meaning of vidui:** This does not mean that the Almighty will testify, but that the ba'al teshuva makes the

Almighty as witness to his teshuva. He stands before the Almighty and says: You are witness that I truly do not want to anymore. This is the true simple meaning of vidui — one stands before the Almighty and takes Him as witness.

7. **"Knower of secrets" means secrets of the heart:** Not that the Almighty knows the future, but that He knows what is in the heart. A person says "I don't want to anymore" — this is an internal matter, no one knows if it is true, only the Almighty knows. A person can see if you make "cases" (actions), but the Almighty sees what you want inside.

8. **"His ways" is a language of character traits/opinions:** The Rambam brings the language "his ways" also in Laws of Character Traits regarding middot. Middot means an internal will — the vidui speaks of training oneself to the will.

9. **Connection to teshuva gemurah:** By teshuva gemurah (Law 1) one has a practical proof — he comes to the same situation and is not nichshal. Here by plain teshuva there is no such proof, but the teshuva is so true that he can say before the Almighty: if there were such a situation, I would not be nichshal. The Almighty is the witness to this.

10. **The verse "and we will no longer say 'our god' to the work of our hands" (Hoshea 14) as a source for vidui:** Idolatry is when a person creates an idol and says "my god" — he accepts the work of his hands as a god. Teshuva means that one says "I will no longer say it." The verse "Return, Israel... take with you words and return to Hashem" (haftarah of Shabbat Shuva) is the source that vidui is "fixed for the future" — vidui of words that speaks about the future. There they say in their vidui: "Assyria will not save us... and we will no longer say 'our god' to the work of our hands" — they speak about what they will no longer do.

11. **[Chassidic interpretation] When a sin becomes so strong that it "rules" over the person (addiction):** The person says: "I should no longer make the sin rule over me — the Almighty rules over me." When a person is nichshal again, the sin rules over him, he cannot get away from it.

12. **Question of Yom Kippur teshuva:** A person who every Yom Kippur does teshuva on something and every year after Yom Kippur does it again — by him the regret is not "for the past," because the sin is still there in him, it is still a present thing. This is not a true "regret for the past."

13. **[Digression: dramatic experiences and teshuva]** "Near death experiences" and certain dramatic experiences can fundamentally change a person's perspective — he begins to realize that one is here temporarily, and this can bring true teshuva.

Law 2 (continued) — Vidui with the Lips vs. Resolution in the Heart

Rambam's words: "And one must confess with his lips and say these matters that he resolved in his heart... and anyone who confesses in words but has not resolved in his heart to abandon, behold this is like one who immerses while holding a sheretz... as it says 'and one who confesses and abandons will be shown mercy.'"

Simple meaning: One must say the vidui with the mouth, but without an internal decision to abandon the sin it is like immersing while holding a sheretz in hand.

Novel Points:

1. **One must read the two laws together:** The Rambam means that one must say it with the mouth, **and** in addition resolve in the heart. Why must one say it with the mouth? There is a virtue in saying it out loud — it helps.

2. **The parable of "immersing while holding a sheretz" — analysis:** Seemingly, when one immerses with a sheretz, one becomes pure at the moment of immersion, but when one comes out and still holds the sheretz, one becomes impure again. So too with vidui: he says "I no longer hold to doing the sin" — something of a will is created, but he does not hold to it, so it is like immersing. **But saying is still worth something** — the Rambam says that "he is immersing," not that he does nothing. One should not, God forbid, stop saying, but sheretz in hand does not help.

3. **[Digression: "Whoever goes to the mikveh without paying is immersing while holding a sheretz.]"** A memory with the Rosh Yeshiva R' Avraham'le, where it was posted in a beit midrash that whoever goes to the mikveh without paying is immersing while holding a sheretz. **Question:** One can say he is a thief, but why "immersing while holding a sheretz"? Because the immersion speaks of matters of faith — it is more than a "mitzvah that comes through a sin."

4. **The verse "and one who confesses and abandons will be shown mercy" (Mishlei 28:13):** "Confesses" is vidui, but it must be together with "and abandons" — only then "will be shown mercy." **Perhaps "confesses" causes "abandons"** — a person who does not confess that he sinned, he does not stop sinning.

5. **"One who covers his transgressions will not succeed" — two interpretations:** (a) He covers it, he does not confess that he sinned. (b) He says vidui but continues in sin — he is "covering" with the vidui itself, he "hangs himself on vidui" and makes himself still a tzaddik with it. The Rambam means both interpretations.

Law 2 (end) — One Must Specify the Sin

Rambam's words: "And one must specify the sin, as it says 'Please, this people has sinned a great sin and made for themselves a god of gold.'"

Simple meaning: One must specify exactly what the sin was.

Novel Points:

1. **Specifying the sin relates to "covering his transgressions":** When a person has not yet truly abandoned, he will say a more general vidui, because he is still "stuck" with some sin. The law of specifying the sin forces him to be specific.

2. **Dispute in the Gemara:** The Rambam rules like Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava (that one must specify) against Rabbi Akiva. The source is from Moshe Rabbeinu's vidui by the Golden Calf, where he specifically specified "and made for themselves a god of gold."

Law 3 — Ways of Teshuva

Rambam's words: "Among the ways of teshuva is that the penitent should cry out constantly before Hashem in weeping and supplication, and do charity according to his ability, and distance himself greatly

from the thing in which he sinned, and change his name meaning I am different and I am not that person who did those deeds, and change all his deeds for good and to the straight path, and go into exile from his place, for exile atones for sin because it causes him to be submissive and to be humble and lowly of spirit."

Simple meaning: The Rambam lists things that help teshuva: crying out to the Almighty, charity, distancing oneself from the sin, changing one's name, changing one's deeds, and going into exile.

Novel Points:

1. **"In weeping and supplication" — praying that the Almighty should forgive:** This means praying that the Almighty should forgive him.

2. **Charity — why?** What does charity have to do with teshuva, especially when the sin is between man and God? By sins between man and his fellow (like theft) one can understand — but between man and God? **Answer:** Charity helps atone for the punishments, and perhaps charity causes teshuva. **Source:** "They tear up a person's decree — charity and crying out and teshuva." Also: "Teshuva, prayer, and charity" from Tana D'vei Eliyahu.

3. **"According to his ability" — what does it mean?** A dispute: (a) It can mean the most he can, (b) It can mean not more than his ability — not endlessly. **The Ba'al HaTanya's approach:** It appears that one who does teshuva gives more than a fifth (the regular measure of charity). The Alter Rebbe explains: Teshuva is pikuach nefesh, and for pikuach nefesh one may give more than a fifth.

4. **"And distance himself greatly from the thing in which he sinned" — not like teshuva gemurah:** By teshuva gemurah (Law 1) he comes to the same situation and overcomes. Here, by "ways of teshuva," it is the opposite — he should distance himself from the situation entirely.

5. **"And change his name" — interpretation:** "His name" does not necessarily mean his last name, but his status/persona. The Rambam explains himself: "meaning I am different and I am not that person who did those deeds." **But it can also be literally changing a name** — just as one changes a name for a sick person. **Novel point:** By a sick person whose name is changed, it is not only a segulah (that the Angel of Death doesn't know the address), but it helps "in the way of teshuva" — the new name always reminds him that he did teshuva when he was sick, and he will not forget it.

6. **"And change all his deeds for good and to the straight path" — not just the sin itself:** Your character also brought you to the sins. It is not enough just to stop the specific sin — he must change all his deeds. **"To the straight path" can mean moderate character traits/the middle way** (like Laws of Character Traits): for example, he stole because he has a lust for money — let him be careful not to be extreme with money anymore.

7. **"And go into exile from his place" — the Rambam's reason:** One could have learned simply that he should get away from bad neighbors. But the Rambam gives another reason: "for exile atones for sin because it causes him to be submissive and to be humble and lowly of spirit." In exile a person is not in his position, he begins to feel more humble. **The Rambam interprets both things (changing name**

and changing place) which one could have thought are a segulah, and he explains how they actually help do teshuva.

Law 4 — Vidui in Public

Rambam's words: "And it is a great praise for a penitent who confesses in public and makes known his transgressions to them, and reveals sins between him and his fellow to others, and says to them 'Indeed I sinned against so-and-so and did such-and-such to him and behold today I repent and regret.'"

Simple meaning: It is a great virtue when the ba'al teshuva confesses in public specifically about sins between man and his fellow.

Novel Points:

1. **Specifically sins between him and his fellow:** The Rambam limits the "vidui in public" to sins between man and his fellow, not between man and God.

2. **This also helps the injured party:** Often the victim feels damaged and shamed, and when the sinner says in public "I was wrong" this is a repair for the other's shame. But also for the sinner himself it is a part of "changing his name and deeds" — until now people knew him as one who insults everyone, and now he changes his public identity.

3. **"One who covers his transgressions will not succeed" — by sins between man and his fellow:** Whoever keeps sins that he did against other people, his teshuva is not complete, and he will fall back into sin.

Law 5 — Sins Between Man and God: Not to Publicize

Rambam's words: "For sins between him and God one need not publicize himself, and it is brazenness for him if he reveals them... but he repents before God blessed be He and confesses before Him and specifies his sins before Him, and confesses about them before the public in general... and it is good for him that his sin was not revealed, as it says 'Happy is one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.'"

Simple meaning: For sins between man and God one should only confess before the Almighty in detail, and in public one says only generally "I sinned" without details.

Novel Points:

1. **The deeper reason why not to publicize:** The relationship between a person and the Almighty must be an intimate thing. Just as a person does not want to tell just anyone his most intimate things, so one should not publicize sins between man and God. This is not only a law, but a "brazenness" — it shows a lack in the seriousness of the relationship.

2. **"Happy is one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" — desecration of God's name:** When people know that someone sinned, there is an issue of desecration of God's name. When one goes around and says "I sinned," other people can justify their own sins — "one can sin, it's an option." Therefore it is better that one is ashamed of it and keeps it.

Law 6 — The Ten Days of Teshuva and Yom Kippur

Rambam's words: "Even though teshuva and crying out are good always, in the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur it is especially good and is accepted immediately, as it says 'Seek Hashem when He is found'... and on Yom Kippur it is a time of teshuva for all, for the individual and for the many, and it is the end of pardon and forgiveness for Israel, therefore all are obligated to do teshuva and confess on Yom Kippur."

Simple meaning: Teshuva is always good, but the Ten Days of Teshuva are better, and Yom Kippur is the end of pardon and forgiveness, therefore everyone is obligated in teshuva and vidui on Yom Kippur.

Novel Points:

1. **Connection to the previous topic:** The Rambam's transition to the Ten Days of Teshuva is perhaps a continuation of what he said that sins between man and God should not be spoken of in public — therefore a special time for teshuva was established, where one is busy with positive things and mitzvot.

2. **"Good always" — without the special times:** The language "good always" means that teshuva and crying out are always good, even without the special times. Even though today we have all kinds of segulot and yahrzeits, one should remember that the Ten Days of Teshuva are still more important.

3. **"It is accepted immediately" — connection to suspension:** This fits with what the Rambam said earlier that for severe sins teshuva "suspends" until Yom Kippur atones. During the Ten Days of Teshuva one does not remain long "suspended" — one comes down from the suspension immediately, because Yom Kippur comes right away and finishes the process.

4. **"When He is found" / "when He is near" — when is the Almighty near?** The Almighty is always near, what does "when He is near" mean? **Answer:** He is near because the world does teshuva — He is "near to those who love Him." When the world has already taken to mitzvot, they have gone to the mikveh, they have already prayed — then the Almighty is near.

5. **Individual versus many — "whenever we call to Him":** The verse "Who is like Hashem our God whenever we call to Him" is interpreted about the many — when one takes together a community and makes a day of prayer, a day of teshuva, it is as good as the Ten Days of Teshuva. An individual is harder, because a person alone must break through his environment. But in public one can make "we call to Him" at any time. The Rambam says that the Ten Days of Teshuva are special for an individual, but for a community that cries out with a whole heart they are always answered.

6. **"End of pardon and forgiveness" — two interpretations:**

- **Interpretation a:** "End" means a **deadline**. The Sefer HaChinuch says that a person accumulates sins and postpones teshuva — "tomorrow, tomorrow." Yom Kippur is the deadline that forces him to act.

- **Interpretation b:** "End" means the **end of the Ten Days of Teshuva**. The Rambam said that the Ten Days of Teshuva are important, and Yom Kippur is the last day of them — the

end of the special time. This fits with teshuva being "suspended" until Yom Kippur.

7. **"Therefore all are obligated to do teshuva and confess" — what does "all" mean?** If someone already did teshuva earlier, why is he obligated? **Answer:** Vidui is different from teshuva gemurah. The Rambam means that whoever says vidui, this shows that he wants to do teshuva, but one does not necessarily mean a teshuva gemurah. In the time of teshuva one says vidui because vidui is what makes teshuva — one accepts to return.

Law 7 — Order of Vidui on Yom Kippur

Rambam's words: "The mitzvah of vidui on Yom Kippur is that one begins on the eve of the day before eating, lest he choke at the meal before confessing. And even though he confessed before eating, he returns and confesses on the night of Yom Kippur at Maariv, and returns and confesses at Shacharit and at Musaf and at Mincha and at Ne'ilah. And where does he say it? An individual after his prayer, and the prayer leader in the middle of his prayer in the fourth blessing."

Simple meaning: One begins vidui on Erev Yom Kippur before the meal, and repeats it at every prayer of Yom Kippur. The individual says it after Shemoneh Esrei, the prayer leader in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei in the fourth blessing.

Novel Points:

1. **"Lest he choke at the meal" — why is this a reason?** If he dies at the meal, he has in any case a day of death which atones. But the Rambam wants him to have teshuva **before** that. Also, "choke" does not necessarily mean die — he can become sick or in danger, and then he can no longer say vidui. Also: because one eats the final meal while crying and in teshuva, not with liveliness, one can easily choke.

2. **Why does one repeat vidui so many times? — Four answers:**

- **Answer a:** "Lest something of sin happen to him in the meantime" — perhaps he sinned in between (language of the Gemara).

- **Answer b:** Connection to crying out — the Rambam said earlier that "teshuva and crying out" work together. Every prayer is a crying out, and every time one makes a crying out one also does vidui. Perhaps not every prayer is a crying out, but perhaps one of them will be a true crying out, and alongside it the vidui will also be true.

- **Answer c:** Because teshuva gemurah requires vidui only once, but Yom Kippur is "all this and perhaps" — one says vidui so many times so that the person should grasp that he is truly not going to sin anymore. It is a process of deepening the acceptance.

- **Answer d (asked but not resolved):** If one knows for certain that he did not sin on Yom Kippur, perhaps he does not need vidui so many times — this remains an open question.

3. **"An individual after his prayer, and the prayer leader in the middle of his prayer in the fourth blessing":** The individual says vidui after Shemoneh Esrei, and the prayer leader says it in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei in the fourth blessing. In practice one

Law 7 (continued) — Order of Vidui on Yom Kippur

3. **"An individual after his prayer, and the prayer leader in the middle of his prayer in the fourth blessing":** The individual says vidui after Shemoneh Esrei, and the prayer leader says it in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei in the fourth blessing. In practice one also says it in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei (according to the Rema).

Law 8 — Text of the Vidui

Rambam's words: "And the vidui that all Israel has customarily used is 'Aval chatanu' etc. — and this is the essence of vidui."

Simple meaning: The essential text that all of Israel has customarily used is "Aval anachnu va'avoteinu chatanu" — and this is sufficient for the essence of vidui.

Novel Points:

1. **The word "aval" in vidui:** "Aval" means: I am not like one who says "I have not sinned" — rather "aval, we have sinned." This itself is already the essence of vidui.

2. **Difference between vidui of Chapter 1 and vidui of Yom Kippur:** Earlier in Laws of Teshuva (Chapter 1) we speak of the full text with details — "chatati, aviti, pashati" etc. — that speaks of the idea of teshuva in general. But on Yom Kippur, the essence of vidui is only "aval chatanu", and one fulfills the obligation with this. The "al chet" etc. that one elaborates is not indispensable.

Law 9 — Repeating Vidui on Sins from Previous Years

Rambam's words: "Sins that he confessed about on this Yom Kippur, he returns and confesses about them on another Yom Kippur, even though he stands in his repentance, as it says 'For my transgressions I know and my sin is before me always.'"

Simple meaning: Even if a person already did teshuva and has not returned to the same sins, he must confess about them again every Yom Kippur.

Novel Points:

1. **Reason for so many "al chet"s:** This is the reason why one says so many "al chet"s — because even sins that one did only once, one says them every year anew.

2. **The verse "For my transgressions I know and my sin is before me always":** A person should always remember his transgressions — they should constantly be before him.

3. **[Open question:]** If one knows for certain that he did not sin on Yom Kippur, perhaps he does not need so much vidui — but this was not clarified.

Law 9 (continued) — Teshuva Between Man and His Fellow

Rambam's words: "Neither teshuva nor Yom Kippur atone except for sins between man and God... but sins between man and his fellow, such as one who injures his fellow or curses his fellow or robs him, he is never forgiven until he gives his fellow what he owes him and appeases him."

Simple meaning: Teshuva and Yom Kippur only help for sins between man and God (like eating forbidden food, forbidden relations). For sins between man and his fellow

(injuring, cursing, stealing) one must first pay what one owes, and then appease the person.

Novel Points:

1. **Great novel point — appeasement beyond payment:** The Rambam says that "even if he returned to him what he owes him, he must appease him and request from him that he forgive him." Payment alone is not enough. The person has power — he is still angry, he still holds hatred. "To forgive" means one must "re-befriend him" — he should not remain an enemy. This is more than a financial thing — it is a personal, emotional repair.

2. **Even with words:** Even if one only caused the other pain with words (not physically, not financially), one must appease him until he forgives.

Law 9 (continued) — The Process of Appeasement

Rambam's words: "If he was not appeased, he brings to him a row of three people from his friends and they intercede with him... if he was not appeased by them, he brings a second and third. If he did not want — he leaves him and goes, and the one who did not forgive is the sinner."

Simple meaning: If the person does not want to forgive, one brings three times three friends. After three times, if he still does not want — one leaves him, and the one who does not forgive is himself the sinner.

Novel Points:

1. **"They intercede with him" — not a ritual:** The Rambam does not mean a formal ceremony. It is like when a person wants someone to lend him money — he uses his acquaintances, his "political connections." One brings people who can say "he really didn't mean it, he is your friend." It is a practical, social effort.

2. **By a rabbi — a thousand times:** "If it was his rabbi, he goes and comes even a thousand times until he forgives him." By a rabbi the measure of appeasement is unlimited.

3. **Why the one who does not forgive is a sinner:** Because the other humbled himself, he degraded himself, he declared that he did not mean it, he brought friends — "forgive me" does not mean just words, it means he is appeasing, explaining, committing to be better. When one does so much and the other is stubborn — he is the sinner.

4. **Ten people — the concept of a minyan:** Earlier in the appeasement process it comes out to ten (3×3 + the injured party).

Law 10 — Forbidden to Be Cruel

Rambam's words: "It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and not be appeased, rather he should be easy to appease and hard to anger. And at the time when the sinner requests from him to forgive — he should forgive with a whole heart and a willing soul. And even if he troubled him and sinned against him greatly — he should not take revenge or bear a grudge."

Simple meaning: A person must not be cruel. He should be easy to appease and hard to anger. When one asks him for forgiveness, he should forgive with a whole heart.

Novel Points:

1. **"And this is the way of the seed of Israel and their proper heart":** Forgiveness is a sign of Jewishness. The Rambam brings this as a character trait that defines Jewish hearts.

2. **"But the nations are uncircumcised of heart — and their wrath they keep forever":** Gentiles keep their anger and revenge forever. The Rambam connects this with the law that "uncircumcised" refers primarily to gentiles (as in "save me from the uncircumcised").

3. **Proof from the Gibeonites:** The Gibeonites pretended to be Jews, but one recognized that they were not Jews because they did not have Jewish character traits — they did not want to forgive. When Saul's children were hanged at their demand, the Gemara said "cursed are the gentiles and not Israel" — a Jew would have forgiven even if an entire group had been killed.

4. **[Important note — against a mistaken notion:]** There are people who think that gentile morality teaches forgiveness and Jewish morality teaches revenge. The Rambam shows exactly the opposite: Jewish morality is to forgive, and the Gibeonites/gentiles — "they know not mercy."

Law 11 — When the Injured Party Has Died

Rambam's words: When the person who was offended has died, one brings ten people, stands them by his grave, and says "I sinned to Hashem God of Israel and to so-and-so whom I did such-and-such." If one owes money, one gives it to the heirs. If there are no heirs or one does not know who they are — one leaves it with the court.

Simple meaning: Even after the death of the injured party the obligation of teshuva between man and his fellow remains. One brings a minyan to the grave and confesses publicly.

Novel Points:

1. **Ten people — the concept of a minyan:** Here at the grave one also brings ten — it is a concept of a minyan, parallel to the appeasement process ($3 \times 3 +$ the injured party = 10).

2. **Why at the grave — not "magic":** It is not that one goes to the grave because the deceased hears. The essential concept is the public/social side: everyone knows that one was angry. One must repair the honor of the deceased in public. A story is brought of a chassid who offended his rabbi, and the rabbi sent him to the grave — because all the chassidim are angry with him about this. This means: one makes teshuva among Jews, it is a social repair.

3. **Between man and his fellow has a social dimension that goes beyond the injured party himself:** Even when the person no longer lives, the social damage remains — everyone knows what was done. Therefore one needs a public viduy at the grave.

4. **Money to the court:** If there are no heirs, one places the money in the court — just as by theft from the public, where one does public needs because one cannot know who all the injured parties are.

General Observation About the Structure of Chapter 2

Laws between man and his fellow come into Chapter 2 in the middle of the discussion about Yom Kippur. The reason: Teshuva has two sides — between man and God and between man and his fellow — and both are parts of Laws of Teshuva.

Full Transcript**Laws of Repentance Chapter 2: The Nature of True Repentance****Introduction: The Transition from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2**

The holy Rambam says, Laws of Repentance Chapter 2. Basically, it's like this: in the first chapter we learned, one can say, the mitzvah (commandment) of teshuva (repentance). The mitzvah of teshuva, the kapara (atonement), kapara is part of the mitzvah of teshuva, yes? A Jew must do teshuva, and therefore he must achieve atonement, it's part of the same halacha (law). It has rules and laws about when one must say viduy (confession), a Jew must say viduy, when the kapara takes effect, and so forth.

Now the Rambam comes in Chapter 2 to say what is true teshuva. There's even a certain contradiction, and here he makes teshuva easier, he doesn't even say that one must actually say viduy. He is explaining essentially, he says yes in a word, but he is explaining the essence of teshuva, what is true teshuva.

Leniency or Stringency? Two Approaches to Complete Repentance

What do I mean? There is, one can say, a leniency and a stringency.

What is the leniency? One can say that teshuva gemura (complete repentance) means a weaker teshuva than before.

Previously we learned teshuva with viduy, with the divisions of kapara. The essence of teshuva, the reality of teshuva, not the mitzvah of teshuva. And what does teshuva mean? Teshuva means not sinning anymore.

Or one can say the opposite, teshuva means an even higher level. Previously we said that it's Yom Kippur, and the person did teshuva, and he wouldn't want to sin again, but unfortunately many Jews fall again. Does teshuva gemura mean a higher level of teshuva?

The Approach of the Chatam Sofer: Complete Repentance in Halacha

I see he brings here several approaches. He says that the Chatam Sofer says teshuva gemura means, the Rambam means here regarding halacha, that there is a law for example that a criminal is not valid for testimony, yes, a wicked person who commits violence. For this, it doesn't help that he said viduy. For this, one must know that he is no longer a wicked person who commits violence. For this, one needs teshuva gemura.

Right, but meanwhile it also doesn't help what he says here. He must show, he must be able to demonstrate, he must return a lost object in a significant matter and so forth. It's not exactly the same, there are things, there is one who misappropriates a deposit, one who misappropriates regarding a woman, where there must be that he again has an opportunity to swindle, and he didn't swindle. Right, with a

woman it's more. It's more than that, there one must be able to see, and so forth, it's a different place, there are boundaries there, which has more to do with how the court should know that he actually did teshuva. Here we're speaking more about the obligation toward Heaven.

The World of Action Versus the Philosophical Essence

I think that the main thing is that previously it was more about the world of action, more about what stands. Now the Rambam says, he says the truth, often there is such that one must squeeze into a halachic chapter, understand specific laws, afterwards there is the essence, you can say the philosophical idea, the foundation, the essential foundation of teshuva.

Perhaps if one would go into the Sefer HaChinuch which was mentioned earlier, the Rambam says that the manner of teshuva is with viduy. Now he says, the teshuva itself without the mitzvah, if teshuva were not a mitzvah, but it would only be a reality that one must do teshuva, he says, then what does the reality of doing teshuva mean? Yes, but this he says is then the mitzvah, this is the understanding from Sefer HaChinuch.

Law 1: What is Complete Repentance

The Language of the Rambam

The Rambam says, **What is complete repentance? This is when one encounters the same thing in which he transgressed**, he encounters again the same test, he encounters again a possibility, an opportunity, for something in which he already transgressed in the past. **And it is possible for him to do it**, he has the ability to sin again, **and he separates himself and does not do it because of repentance**, but he separates himself, he holds himself back from it, he separates himself from it, and he does not do it, and he did not do it because of repentance, because he did teshuva. Not, **not from fear**, not, he didn't do it because he perhaps fears someone, **and not from weakness of strength**, because he didn't become weak or he doesn't have today the courage to do the sin, rather he does it because of teshuva, because he wants to no longer do any sins. Yes, good. This is teshuva.

The Example of One Who Had Relations with a Woman in Sin

In short, the Rambam explains, **a wicked person who had relations with a woman in sin**, a person had relations with a woman in sin, and now comes again an opportunity, **and after a time he was secluded with her**, he is exactly together with her alone.

Discussion: What Does "Secluded with Her" Mean?

Speaker 1: He doesn't mean to say in a manner that he transgresses yichud (seclusion), because that itself is a sin. He means to say he again has the opportunity to sin with her. The truth is that it is indeed a transgression, because certainly in such a manner that he can sin, that is the prohibition of yichud. It's no form. Yichud means being in a situation where one can sin. He certainly did the sin, but the Rambam doesn't mean to say that. It can also mean he is again in her vicinity and he can make a phone call and be with her. He has the opportunity.

Speaker 2: The Rebbe says, the Rebbe says, secluded with her, secluded with her means actually, and he was secluded. This is difficult to say. He's not speaking about life, which yichud, he's speaking more one sees the teshuva. Okay.

Speaker 1: And again, yichud there is a manner in which one doesn't transgress yichud just like that, but he can still... That manner is one transgresses yichud... If it's in a manner that it's enough that it could enable the sin, that's the meaning of yichud. That's certain, that one transgresses... Clear, plain simple yichud...

Innovation: Complete Repentance Even with Weaknesses

In the midst of teshuva he did, and then one sees that a teshuva is okay, as long as there is a boundary. Even if we're already speaking of one who still turns around with women, not that he has stopped turning around. Then, certainly the true way of doing teshuva is not complete repentance. The true way of teshuva is to stop turning to places where there are women, I don't know, for a year or two and such, that it becomes, but he's going to say later, how for a year or two, I think, it says explicitly that one should actually not do this, but he says that even not, he is even simple, I say simple, what is true teshuva?

True teshuva is... I always, I agree I still go to the same places, and she still loves me, does she still? Does she still love me, but physically he can still do the sin, but from the side of teshuva, and again in the same vicinity I see...

Discussion: Yichud as a Boundary in Itself

Speaker 2: Yichud is not yichud and the Mordechai... Yes, but he means to say, perhaps not yichud that one is in another place, where there is someone who can hear more, and so forth. It's different. Yichud is not if it was, on the sin itself, the sin is a transgression, the sin is. See how complete repentance... With the reason for this, what it means with that certain word, what it is difficult to say, would be repentance, when he holds himself back from the woman. One can say he heard that one can yes. Yichud is still just a boundary, for this, the sin is not. But it's a boundary for this.

Speaker 1: But, according to what one should say, a complete penitent means from this is a complete penitent from the first woman that is, he doesn't have complete repentance from the first yichud, for this there must be the next opportunity to transgress yichud, in truth, but also yichud, here there is a boundary in itself, this is a sin in itself, but it's a boundary for sins. It's not magic in halacha.

He is yes, he's not a full penitent, he still doesn't have control over all mitzvot, like one who from yichud he still was. He is yes, he is even more, he fulfilled what is in yichud before, even with the Almighty Himself. He's a great tzaddik (righteous person), and I would give him notes. This is no trick.

You're right, but I want to tell you, that it says complete penitent, does it mean that it's a complete penitent, he actually gave up yichud. I think that one must praise the person, I would give credit to the person, okay? That he took on his sins, but on the contrary, one should not do it. On the contrary, one should do it. There were some commentators who say what should he do it, but on the contrary, one should not do it. But we're speaking that even if it's a manner, this is complete repentance. The Yerushalmi says. Okay.

Speaker 2: It could be that in this manner he also had suffering, perhaps this requires suffering.

Speaker 1: No, but I need to understand, what does he want to bring out? If one is not so, he has begun to become very careful about yichud, the simple one hasn't solved his problem of having relations with the woman. Because, if it has a motive,

what does yichud do? The yichud is not a thing, one can use everything. But sometimes it happens, very much not, but sometimes it happens.

Parable: The Alcoholic

One is, let's say, an alcoholic, right? A normal person can drink in moderation, because a normal person drinks a little, and won't get drunk. One is an alcoholic, and he says, I can't, I can make a vow, I will absolutely not drink one glass, right? That person who can't be a complete penitent, if the only way to repentance is to instantly run very far from the wine, perhaps he must do so, for his sake it is indeed worse, but a complete penitent is, that he still loves wine, but he learned to drink in moderation, not too much, for this brings out here in this approach, you say it's not practical, you're not serious, that you remain here? Anonymously, perhaps anonymously...

The Verse "Remember Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth"

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, which is remembering the Almighty in your young years, **before the evil days come and the years arrive of which you will say I have no pleasure in them.** The Rambam explains there very nicely, that one warns a person, do teshuva when you are still young, because then the proof is that you still have the strength and you would still have been able to sin.

Law 2: Repentance in the Days of Old Age

Because if the evil days have come, the older years, the years of bad, and years when then one no longer has desire, which means here lust, you don't have then any capability, a desire. One says, ah he became older, he cast off his sins, he can't say so, one is a hater of sin, he no longer has from this to speak in shul and begins not to send, that this is bad teshuva, but teshuva is when he was there with the strength.

The Amshinover Rebbe's Innovation Regarding Blemish of the Covenant

Very good. I heard that the Amshinover Rebbe says, that many people struggle with sins of blemishing the covenant and so forth, he says that it's actually teshuva to do, because since he is not... he doesn't even need a woman, it's from his own side, that every day he is essentially complete repentance.

If he holds himself back and he doesn't need to make rectifications, because this is rectifications that speaks of one who doesn't have complete repentance, if he is in the same situation, if he puts a filter etc. then he is already prevented from sin, another level, even if he doesn't have and he holds himself back, this is complete repentance.

The Language of the Rambam: Repentance in the Days of Old Age

The Rambam says, **And if he did not repent except in the days of his old age,** what happens when a person couldn't do the sin and he separated himself? He did teshuva when he already has no potential, when he is already old, **at a time when it is impossible for him to do what he used to do,** the Rambam says, **even though it is not excellent repentance,** but this one sees yes, complete means important excellent, he says no.

Okay yes, true. And even if it's not excellent repentance, excellent perhaps, it is however good for him! It is excellent for him. It means... is he called a penitent? Because in practice... the point is not to become, not to become such... the point is

that he no longer stumbles in sin, he no longer has such a thing. He says, ideal is so, but in practice this is also good. Anonymously, it's also good this way. This is better than nothing, even if he is already old and he does teshuva in the days of his old age, this is also good. True. But one must say all this, remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

Question: Repentance of a Dying Person

And one explains his repentance, it was interesting, when he knows he is going to die, and what is relevant to say he will no longer sin, "I will not return to this sin ever"? One is going to die. But he had regret, it was true regret.

One takes, it's like... interesting, because if we think that regret is only a preparation for what I will never sin again, it's not relevant when he's going to die. Well, yes, one can understand. It could be from the other side the... the...

Law 2 (Continued): Repentance on the Day of Death

Speaker 1:

Because in practice, the point is not to show tricks, to show that he can, the point is that one no longer stumbles in sin.

One says ideal is so, but in practice it's also good this way. The sin didn't become better not to do. The Rambam says, **"even if he transgressed all his days and did teshuva on the day of his death"**, so he did it. He says already earlier also, I saw it all the years. What does he say there? The main thing is remembering his Creator. And there is truth what you say, it is true.

Question: How Can One Speak of Repentance on the Day of Death?

Speaker 1:

But it's an interesting thing, when he knows he is going to die, what is relevant to say that he will no longer sin? He's going to die. But he had true regret. It's like interesting, because if we think that regret is only a preparation for what I will never sin again, it's not relevant when he's going to die.

Speaker 2:

Yes, one can understand. It could be from the other side, the other problem is only that he won't stumble again. Once he dies, he no longer has the problem either.

Speaker 1:

Again, they mean that he has regret and he actually becomes a better person in a certain sense, and he becomes a good person, he would no longer sin. The will to sin is still a bit of a sin.

Speaker 2:

Yes, but if the doctor tells him that it was a mistake, he is healthy and strong, then he would grab back his sins.

Speaker 1:

I don't know, that's a good question, that's a good question.

Example from Dostoevsky

Speaker 1:

Nothing, there is that which great writer, Dostoevsky, I don't know what, he already stood before the shooting, and his life changed very strongly. This is a thing, when a person sees the day of death in front of his eyes, it could be that it is actually something a deeper teshuva, and not just "anyway I'm dying, I have regret, what did I have from it?" and one begins to have fear.

Repentance from Fear vs. True Repentance

Speaker 1:

Also the Rambam would say, if one does it from fear, it's not called excellent repentance. The teshuva on the day of death is not complete repentance. Now he's not speaking of one who stumbles in one. It says that on the day of death is also not from fear, because if it's from fear, he fears he will get punished. We're speaking here that he did teshuva because he made a deep contemplation, and he indeed became a better person.

Discussion: What Happens When He is Saved?**Speaker 2:**

What actually happens when a person is in such a situation? Later it happens that he is saved. There are both kinds of people. There are people who remain, and there are people who immediately when he is rolled over becomes, if he remains he remains.

Speaker 1:

No, that's not a proof, but one doesn't forget. There are people who remain with their teshuva, and there are people who don't. There are both.

There are people who were sick, and it changed their life, because they began to have a different perspective, they began to do things differently. There are those who say that dramatic experiences, "near death experiences", with certain drugs that have such effectiveness, it very strongly changed the perspective, it made that a person should truly realize that one is here temporarily, and one can take and begin better perspectives on the world.

Verse "Until the Sun Sets"**Speaker 2:**

What does it say, "**all the sins of this one are forgiven**"?

Speaker 1:

"**All the sins of this one are forgiven**", the forgiveness is for all sins, "**as it says**"... it's the continuation of that verse, right? It's the next verse.

Speaker 2:

Yes. "**You return man to dust, You extend Your anger**".

Speaker 1:

The wisdom is that it depends on my choice either way. But in any case, "**until the sun sets**", is still before the sun goes down. Meaning, when a person dies, "**and the light and the moon and the stars**", until everything becomes dark. When a person dies, the sun is dark for him, at least from his perspective. Perhaps it means his eyes. "**And the light and the moon and the stars, and the clouds return after the rain**".

Speaker 2:

Yes, it comes from... "**and the clouds return after the rain**", what is that?

Speaker 1:

"**That is the day of death**". In general, from here we learn, "**a person should see and repent before he dies, lest he say**". So, on this the Sages say, "**repent one day before your death**".

Speaker 2:

Yes, because you don't know when you're going to die, so, he says, continue.

Halacha 3 – What is Teshuva?**Speaker 1:**

Now we're going to learn, "**What is teshuva?**" It's already the third.

Speaker 2:

Very good. What is the third thing?

What is the Essential Teshuva?**Speaker 1:**

"**What is teshuva?**" What is the essential teshuva? Teshuva, he means, now he's not talking about complete teshuva anymore. Earlier he spoke about there being a mitzvah that when one does teshuva it should be in a manner with vidui (confession). Now he said, how does one know that a person has done teshuva? That which he sinned, he doesn't do it again. Now he says, what is teshuva?

"**It is that the sinner abandons his sin**". It's not complete teshuva. Complete teshuva is simply, he came to the same situation and he doesn't do the sin. Now one says, essentially what he's going to explain here is mainly the plain meaning of vidui, if you want you can write there. What he's talking about here is, what does vidui mean? What does it mean what I wrote "the inner dimension of vidui"? Because he goes through here the order of vidui and he explains all the things that he said there.

So here he's explaining more what is teshuva, which is not complete teshuva. What does it mean that he should do teshuva? Perhaps one can interpret that the "do teshuva" refers to the second part, what he says "do teshuva", and the "and confess" refers to the teshuva. But actually one doesn't need to go into that situation again.

Three Parts of Teshuva**Speaker 1:**

So what is teshuva? "**That the sinner abandons his sin**", he leaves it. "**And removes it from his thoughts**", he takes it away from his thoughts.

Innovation: "And Removes It From His Thoughts" – Not With His Thoughts, But From His Thoughts**Speaker 1:**

Interestingly, he doesn't take it away with his thoughts, because he's going to remember it, "**he regrets the past**". It means to say that he removes the excitement. That is, he looks at the sin as something positive, as something he wants to do again, and he removes it. Thought is usually, in the holy tongue it already means a plan, something like, "**one who devises plans**" which he wants...

Speaker 2:

Yes, it means a plan, he thinks...

Speaker 1:

He removes it from his... not even a plan anymore. "**And resolves in his heart**", he strengthens in his... in his mind, "**that he will not do it again**", it won't happen to him anymore.

"**As it says**", we see a verse, "**let the wicked abandon his way**", the wicked should abandon his way, so that's the "abandon etc. the sin". "**And the man of iniquity his thoughts**", should remove the thought, the plan to sin again.

Innovation: The Order – First "Remove It From His Thoughts" and Then "Regret the Past"

Speaker 1:

But that's not enough, because that's only regret about the past. It's not just that it wasn't worthwhile. It says "I am ashamed", but I think it simply means, instead of what happened. It would have been better, it would have been different otherwise. It's not too complicated.

Speaker 2:

No, it's the same thing as comfort from sorrow, comfort from sorrow.

Speaker 1:

No, it means that it means to be comforted, I mean such regret about the past.

Speaker 2:

Um, I see. I mean regret about what has passed.

Speaker 1:

There's no difference. Both mean the same thing. I think it means the past. I think it means the past. Because he brings the verse "**after I returned I regretted**". It means like that. Afterwards.

Speaker 2:

Okay... "**as it says 'after I returned'**", after I did teshuva.

Speaker 1:

It's still after he did the abandonment... "**I regretted**" – perhaps if this is the interpretation?!

Speaker 2:

No, I think it's a good interpretation – let me explain first. Because the verse? Ah... "**Return me and I will return, after I returned I regretted**"... I don't know. What is the interpretation of this passage. Well...

Speaker 1:

Okay "**after I returned I regretted**", after I did teshuva "**I regretted**" I have regret about the past. "**After I was made aware**" of the sin and transgression, "**I struck my thigh**", he clapped his hand from pain, but the sin he did.

Discussion: What Does "After I Returned" Mean?

Speaker 2:

What does that teshuva mean? After teshuva? Perhaps it means after he received rebuke?

Speaker 1:

But I'm already doing teshuva, teshuva means that.

Speaker 2:

No, teshuva means abandoning, that he throws away the...

Explanation: Why First "Remove It From His Thoughts" and Then "Regret the Past"

Speaker 1:

I'll tell you a simple good interpretation. As long as he still looks at the sin as a good thing, as something that when he thinks about it gives him good feelings, "wow, I can do it again, it's going to be so much fun", then the thinking itself is something bad. So he must first look at the sin differently, and remove it from his thoughts, so that when he thinks about the sin he should think of it as something I don't want to do anymore, it's a bad thing. And only afterwards can he begin to have regret about the past. Because as long as he still looks at

the sin as a good thing, he has good feelings when he thinks back, then that's the same thing.

I saw a simple thing, when a person thinks that he had an experience, he transgressed, as you said earlier, he transgressed with a married woman, wow, and every time he thinks about it he's seized with desire for how good it was, then the thinking itself about this is a transgression. So only after he has already removed it from his thoughts, I have no more plans, I'm not going to do it anymore, it's certainly only from the past.

Precision in "The Past"

Speaker 1:

About this the Rambam perhaps emphasized the word "the past". Now it's only a thing of the past, it's no longer something that exists in the present, it's not a thing anymore that's still in his plans going forward. As long as a person is still stuck in sin, it's past, present, and also future. Every time he thinks, he thinks how good it was and how good it's going to be again. Now he thinks that it's something from "the past", because he has already removed it from his thoughts about the future.

Discussion: Is This All One Thing?

Speaker 2:

I think that all these things aren't really so separate. Because the point is, I no longer hold that it's a good thing. I thought it was a good thing, I sinned. Now I hold that it's not a good thing. That already includes regret, that includes everything. You're dividing one thing into many levels, but in truth it's all the same thing.

Speaker 1:

It's not like that. Because I'll tell you, for example a person who every Yom Kippur does teshuva for something, and every year after Yom Kippur he does it again. So what he does on Yom Kippur isn't serious, because there is indeed some "removal and regret", but the "removal and regret" isn't about the past. The "removal and regret" is about something that's still there in him. We talk too much about those cases, it's not really what usually happens. With us there's more... we don't talk, but no, we're talking about someone who's more simple. Let's imagine that we're talking about a more simple case. I thought it was good, it's not good. Good day, I'm moving on, it's not.

"And Testify About Him to the Knower of Secrets" – The Meaning of Vidui

Speaker 1:

Okay, but he says further, "**and testify**" - that means, and he should make testimony about himself.

Ah, so earlier we spoke about someone who will again be in a similar situation and not stumble. Here we're talking about a person where there's no proof that he'll be tested again, because here we're talking about teshuva. But what yes, the Knower of Secrets, the Almighty, or if someone could be in his head, he would testify that the teshuva is so genuine that he truly doesn't want to return.

So I'm telling you the interpretation, the interpretation of the Lechem Mishneh, the true interpretation.

Speaker 2:

Yes, here it doesn't mean that the Almighty will testify, it means he should make the Almighty a testimony for himself.

Speaker 1:

He will tell Him before the Almighty, this is the explanation of the entire halacha, it's essentially an explanation of what vidui means. Vidui is before the Almighty, because I mean to say, I mean to say before the Almighty, I mean to say, the Almighty knows that I don't want to anymore.

So I'm not going to be able to prove it, it's not like the beginning of the chapter, we're talking about a situation where he can prove it, because we're talking about... when he's old or when he's... but the teshuva is so true, let's not return to me. The teshuva is so strongly true that if there were such a situation I wouldn't stumble. The teshuva is so strongly true, he says this before the Almighty. He takes the Almighty as testimony about this.

Speaker 2:

You're saying it's so strongly true, so it fits very well.

Speaker 1:

So it's again the same teaching as before, except this time he doesn't actually have the reality to prove it, but he says it's as genuine as then.

This is the Meaning of Vidui**Speaker 1:**

So this is the meaning of vidui, which we learned in the previous chapter, what is vidui? This is before the Almighty. What does that mean to say, I take the Almighty as testimony about this. I tell Him, the Almighty is testimony that I don't want to anymore. No one knows that I don't want to, only the Almighty knows. Knower of Secrets means secrets of the heart, not secrets that He knows the future. A person says I don't want to anymore, that's an internal matter.

The entire vidui that's written here, I once argued with you, the ways, the language that the Rambam uses for Hilchot Deot, about character traits, character traits means an internal feeling, an internal will of what I want. So here I want to express myself to the Almighty.

Halacha 3 (Continued): Vidui With His Lips and Resolution in His Heart**Speaker 1:**

So, but this is the meaning of vidui, because he took in the previous paragraph, what must vidui be before the Almighty? Because it means to say, I take the Almighty as testimony for this. I tell Him, the Almighty is witness that I don't want to anymore. No one knows that you don't want to, only the Almighty knows.

Knower of Secrets means secrets of the heart, not secrets that He knows the future. A person says, I don't want to anymore, it's an internal matter. The entire vidui that's written here, I once thought, his ways is a language that the Rambam brings regarding Hilchot Deot, regarding character traits. Character traits means an internal feeling, an internal will of what I want. So here you want to express yourself to the will. Who knows what you want? No one knows. A person can see if you make a case, but the Almighty can see what you want. That's the Knower of Secrets.

"Knower of Secrets that he will not return to this sin ever." His teshuva, his abandonment, and his regret about the past should be so strong that he doesn't want to. As you say, so strong that if someone could see secrets, he would see

that it's as genuine as when a person does teshuva and he has an opportunity afterwards and he doesn't do it.

"As it says, 'and we will no longer say our god to the work of our hands'." How does it fit? As it says, I didn't understand? A person says, I will no longer... serving idolatry is like accepting the work of one's hands as god. A person creates a little idol and he says "my god", and I'm going to do teshuva so strongly that I won't say it anymore.

This is what the verse says "Return Israel", this is the haftarah of Shabbat Shuva. **"Take with you words"**, he says, vidui words. Yes, **"and return to Hashem"**. Very good. The verse explains, what should he say? **"Assyria will not save us"**. What is that? They're saying as part of their vidui. You see here is the source that vidui is fixed for the future, which the Rambam said. Here they say, what do they say? We will no longer make our... they're saying they will no longer accept as god the work of their hands.

Vidui With His Lips and Resolution in His Heart

The Rambam, **"and one must confess with his lips"**. **Very good. "And say these matters."** I think my Hasidic interpretation, many times here when the sin becomes so strong, that it becomes like his... it becomes dominant over him, he's addicted to the sin. Okay, I'm leaving, I'm leaving. I should no longer make the sin dominant over me, the Almighty is dominant over me. When a person stumbles again and again, the sin is dominant over you, you can't get away from it.

So the Rambam says, I think one must read the two halachot together. One must say it with the mouth, say what he said, resolution in his heart. Why? I don't know why, it helps. There's some virtue in saying it out with the mouth.

But, **"anyone who confesses in words, one who confesses only with words, but has not resolved in his heart to abandon, he hasn't truly resolved in his heart to abandon the sin, behold this is like one who immerses while holding a dead reptile."** He's like one who immerses, a mikveh does help, but he's still holding his sin in his hand. He says the right words, the words are perhaps a mikveh, a mikveh purifies, but he hasn't resolved in his heart, he's still holding in his hand the thing which is the sin.

It's very interesting, the sinner, when one immerses with a reptile in his hand, seemingly the moment he immerses he's pure, but the moment he comes out he's still holding the reptile, so he becomes impure again. It seems that here he says... okay, that's a different topic. But no, I understand what he means, the purity doesn't become pure in the mikveh, but the person does become pure, but he becomes impure again the same second. It could be the same thing, he says, he says, "I'm no longer doing the sin," something of a certain will is created, but you're not holding to it, so it's like you're immersing. But you are immersing, he says that he's immersing, he doesn't say that he's saying nothing. Saying is worth something, I don't hold that one shouldn't say God forbid, but a reptile in his hand doesn't help.

Digression: Immersing While Holding a Reptile – Going to the Mikveh Without Paying

I remember, with my Rosh Yeshiva R' Avraham'le, we spoke in a beit midrash, and it says there, "whoever goes to the mikveh without paying is immersing while holding a reptile." What kind of thing is that? It's a reptile! You can say that a person

who goes without paying is a thief, is a reptile. But why is he immersing while holding a reptile? The immersion helps in matters of beliefs. It's more than a mitzvah that comes through a transgression.

"One Who Confesses and Abandons Will Find Mercy"

The Rambam says further, **"and so it says, so it's actually written in the verse, 'one who confesses and abandons will find mercy'."** So confession is the vidui, but it must be together with the "and abandons". Only afterwards will he find mercy. If he confesses but doesn't abandon, it's not applicable. It's explicitly stated in the verse **"one who covers his transgressions will not succeed'."** He doesn't say vidui, he keeps it, he won't succeed. But **"one who confesses and abandons will find mercy'."**

Perhaps the confession causes the abandonment. Just as you literally said at the beginning when we learned, that a person who doesn't confess that he sinned, doesn't stop sinning further. So, apparently from this verse from Proverbs it speaks about this, that a person shouldn't convince himself that he's righteous.

I think the Rambam means the entire verse. I'll translate it nicely for you. Because "covers his transgressions" can mean, as you said, that he covers, he conceals it. He doesn't hold it strongly in his hands, he only holds it in his... he doesn't confess. But in another sense it can mean "covers his transgressions" that he says vidui, but he still holds onto it. He covers with the vidui. Like "hangs himself on vidui". He holds it with the vidui, he makes himself a righteous person too, that he even says vidui.

One Must Detail the Sin

The Rambam says, **"and one must detail the sin", to enumerate the sin, "as it says 'please, this people has sinned a great sin'", and afterwards he enumerates what sin it was, "and they did such and such"**.

English Translation

"One must specify the sin" is another law, or perhaps it's a law in... that when a person hasn't truly abandoned [the sin] yet, then he will say something more general, because he's still stuck with some sin. This is a law in viduy (confession). The Rambam has a dispute in the Gemara, Rabbi Akiva held, but Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava said that one must bring a verse. Moshe Rabbeinu didn't want to give in to the Jews, he said "I can't tell you any matters." I think it has to do with "mechaseh peshav lo yatzliach" (one who covers his transgressions will not succeed). Those who conceal, as you say, he sinned, what exactly did he sin? Ah.

Law 4: From the Ways of Teshuva

The Rambam says further... okay, so until now we've learned the fundamentals of teshuva. Right. We've learned what teshuva is, the mitzvah of teshuva, what is complete teshuva, what is teshuva. Now we're going to learn "midarkhei hateshuva" (from the ways of teshuva), other things that help teshuva, and other matters of teshuva.

"From the ways of teshuva," says the Rambam, "is that the penitent should cry out constantly before Hashem with weeping and supplication." That the person doing teshuva should cry out to the Almighty, requests, prayers, with weeping and supplication. I think this means crying that the Almighty should help him do teshuva, no? That

the Almighty should forgive him. He prays that the Almighty should forgive him.

Tzedaka According to His Ability

What about tzedaka according to his ability? What about tzedaka? Teshuva, tefilla, tzedaka, we see this in the Tanna D'vei Eliyahu.

Speaker 2:

Yes, but tzedaka... tzedaka, even for example if his sin was... tzedaka means he didn't give tzedaka?

Speaker 1:

I think that tzedaka is some kind of way, perhaps tzedaka causes teshuva? I don't know. It helps that the Almighty should forgive the sin, and perhaps it helps to atone for the punishments that were supposed to come. Yes?

Speaker 2:

I would say this: when the sin is in matters between man and his fellow, I can hear that, let's say, he stole, now he gives a lot of tzedaka. But when the sin was between man and God, does one still need tzedaka?

Speaker 1:

Okay, it could be as you say, that these are still matters of more teshuva, higher levels of teshuva. It says "three things tear up a person's decree: tzedaka, crying out, and teshuva," this is one of the sources in this piece of Rambam.

And Distance Himself Far from the Thing He Sinned With

But what is "distance himself far from the thing he sinned with"? He goes away. Not as you say there, for example, with siyata dishmaya (divine assistance), on the contrary, he should strengthen himself more in that point.

And Change His Name

"And change his name, meaning I am different," he should make by himself... "his name" means his status, it doesn't mean his last name. Yes, "his name," one can speak of him as the last one who comes into shul speaking lashon hara (evil speech). He should change his persona. Yes, it could be he should actually change his name, but the point, the Rambam explains, what will it help? **"I am different and I am not that person who did those deeds,"** I am now something new.

Very good, this is what is done when someone is sick, and one changes his name. Perhaps literally he also means that. Aha, "I am not that so-and-so," okay.

And Change All His Deeds for Good and the Straight Path

"And change all his deeds for good and the straight path." He changes all his deeds, not just... he changes the way like this. He takes his deeds, it's an interesting thing. Because somehow your character also brought about the sins. No, it's not the sin itself. Aha, "all his deeds for good," he conducts himself more refined, it has an influence on you. Very good, very good. "For good and the straight path."

Regarding the three things it says "four things change," change place, change deed, change deed is teshuva itself. That's it. No, it could also be "for good and the straight path" means that he should work more on balanced character traits, on the middle path. The Almighty punished him for stealing, he understands that he has a desire for money, he should also be careful not to be extreme with money.

I noticed when the Rambam also says tzedaka, what is tzedaka? Says the Rambam, he adds in brackets, "lest you say that teshuva reaches until he gives all his money to the poor." And it could also be that one throws in, this too is a dispute in the Baal HaTanya. The Baal HaTanya says that one is led to give more than a fifth. What is known that the custom to give more than a fifth in tzedaka? Is a teshuva. And the Alter Rebbe says that the Torah says this is a teshuva, and teshuva is pikuach nefesh (saving a life), and for pikuach nefesh one may. But here we're talking about not so much tzedaka, also according to his ability. Yes?

The "according to his ability" means the most he can, but yes.

Digression: Changing a Name for a Sick Person

When one changes the name of a person who is sick, it could be it actually helps a bit, he becomes a bit different. I'm not Yaakov, I'm Yaakov Meir. Like the "do not stray after your hearts," or from last night. No, I'm not talking about belief. The person thinks it's a segula (spiritual remedy), the Angel of Death doesn't know the address, he'll get confused. I say it can help through the path of teshuva, as it is here. There's a person who celebrated until the day of death, and now he's called differently. It will always remind him that, ah, remember when you were sick you did teshuva. But he'll forget. But he has a different name, he won't forget it, he'll a bit... I hear, I hear.

And Exile from His Place

And exile from his place. But I'm not sure that what he says about tzedaka here means according to his ability, one could mean on the contrary, the most he can. It doesn't have to mean only the minimum. Perhaps, okay, I have a bit more than the minimum, but not endlessly, not more than his ability.

He says further, "**and exile from his place,**" he should go away from his place. It's interesting, because simply one could have learned it as we learned earlier, that a person is drawn after his place. He sinned, presumably he had bad neighbors from whom he learned. But here the Rambam says something different: "**for exile atones for sin, because it causes him to be submissive and to be humble and lowly of spirit.**" In exile no person is in his position, his status. He begins to feel more like a person, because he closed the door. You see that the Rambam interprets here the two things that one might think are like a segula, change his name and place, and the Rambam explains how this can actually help him do teshuva.

Okay.

Law 4 (Continued): Confession in Public

The Rambam says further, "**and it is a great praise for the penitent that he confess publicly and make known his transgressions to them.**" We learned earlier that he should confess before the Almighty, "and say before Hashem." He speaks to the Almighty. But here there is a matter that he should speak to the people, he should confess before the Almighty publicly, or perhaps even he should confess before the people. I want to tell you what I did.

Look what it says: "**and one who speaks to them and reveals sins between him and his fellow to others.**" Ah, specifically sins between him and his fellow to others, this wronged other people. "**And says to them: Indeed I sinned against so-and-so and did such and such to**

him, and behold today I repent and regret." I speak about what I did.

I think this also helps for the other person, because often the other person feels wronged, and the other person holds that I wronged him for...

Law 7: Public Confession - Sins Between Man and His Fellow

Speaker 1:

But there's also a matter that he should speak to the people. He should confess perhaps before the Almighty publicly, but perhaps even he should confess before the people. He should say before the people, "I want to tell you what I did."

Look what it says: "**and reveals sins between him and his fellow to others.**" Ah, specifically sins between him and his fellow to others. This wronged other people. "**And says to them, indeed I sinned against so-and-so and did such and such to him, and behold today I repent and regret.**" I regret what I did.

I think this also helps for the other person, because often the other person feels wronged, the other person was embarrassed, and he says, "I was wrong."

But also for you, this is part of changing his name and deeds. Until now you were known as the one who attacks everyone. "In all the proud I and he cannot dwell," one who holds himself in pride, and he can't be with you.

"But one who covers his transgressions has no complete teshuva, as it says, 'one who covers his transgressions will not succeed.'" This is the beginning of the verses we saw earlier. He won't succeed in doing teshuva, he'll fall back into sin.

Law 8: Private Confession - Sins Between Man and God

Speaker 1:

But I also think, because there are many times the person who shames another publicly, and afterwards is very ashamed, he says, "I have no way."

He says: "**When does this apply? To sins between him and his fellow. But sins between him and God, he need not publicize himself.**" There where he sinned between him and God, only the Almighty, he sinned against the Almighty, he need not publicize himself, "**and it is brazenness for him if he reveals them.**" It's brazenness if he reveals this.

Discussion: Why Shouldn't One Reveal Sins Between Man and God?

Speaker 2:

Why shouldn't one reveal when one has sinned? When someone says viduy, he wants to speak out the filth from himself, the sin.

Speaker 1:

Yes, because the relationship between a person and the Almighty must be an intimate thing. It must be something that one takes so seriously, just as a person doesn't want to tell just anyone his most intimate things. Yes?

Okay. "**Rather he repents before God, blessed be He, and confesses before Him, and details his sins before Him, and confesses them before the public in general.**" He says, "Yes, I sinned," but he doesn't say what he

did. **"And it is good for him that his sin not be revealed."** It's good for a person that his sin not be revealed.

And it says **"happy is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,"** which is for the person who is concealed or forgotten. "Forgiven" means, I think, that it's not good that one knows that a person sinned, because there's a kind of thing with desecration of God's name, because when one does a sin publicly there's a matter of desecration of God's name.

Speaker 2:

No, I think that, this is how I used to think, that it means a person goes around saying "I sinned," two people are right. No, one can sin. One can sin, there's an option.

Speaker 1:

No, it's better that one be ashamed of it. Very good.

Law 9: The Ten Days of Repentance

Speaker 1:

Now the Rambam will speak about the special time of teshuva, which is a novelty of the Rambam. I've now learned that there's a matter of crying out and all these things, which isn't teshuva itself, it's for teshuva, and there are things that help do teshuva, it's advice for teshuva. Says the Rambam, one of the pieces of advice is the order of the act of teshuva basically. Yes?

It could be that it's connected with what he just said, that there are certain ways how it's forbidden to speak about one's sins. He now says another thing, that it's also a good thing that one should set aside a certain time for teshuva. Perhaps, I don't know, just as he says that matters between him and God one should only speak to the Almighty and such, it's not good that one speaks publicly. Perhaps this is a continuation, that for this reason there's also that a time was made for teshuva. By the way, one should only be busy with positive things, with mitzvot. I don't know, I haven't thought about it. I think it could be, I would have thought that he's already saying, one shouldn't add. He says that one of the pieces of advice, the ways of teshuva, is that the Ten Days of Repentance were made. And it also helps that there's a public with him.

The Rambam says that **"although teshuva and crying out are always good,"** crying out to the Almighty, always good is an eternal thing, always a good thing, teshuva, the eve of Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and the Rambam speaks. No, before he says all these times, the eve of Yom Kippur, and so on. "Always good" means in our times. It means always crying out to the Almighty is good. So he gave himself advice, as the Rambam says, as if we have all these things today, when a Jew does teshuva, it's some segula, some yahrzeit, and some prayer for this. But he wants to say, remember that the Ten Days of Repentance are still more important than Rabbi Shimon's yahrzeit. The Ten Days of Repentance are **"between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and even better."** The ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the Ten Days of Repentance, are the best time for teshuva, and one is immediately accepted, and immediately his teshuva is accepted.

This fits very well, because earlier he said that one must follow through until Yom Kippur. So you don't remain hanging too long, you don't hang long, you come right down from the suspension, because Yom Kippur comes immediately and you finish the teshuva.

"As it says 'Seek Hashem when He is found,'" you should seek the Almighty, seek the Almighty when He is found among the people. **"Call upon Him when He is near,"** but this needs Chazal. When is He "when He is near"? **"Chazal said,"** when is this? This is in the Ten Days of Repentance, when the Almighty is among... Yes.

Discussion: What Does "When He is Near" Mean?

Speaker 2:

How does one interpret "when He is near" when the Almighty is among the people? I mean, when is He not? I mean, He's always near, especially during the Ten Days of Repentance He's more near.

Speaker 1:

The reason is because the people do teshuva. He's near because the people do teshuva, He's near to those who love Him, to those who love Him. Right, because the people have already taken to the mitzvah, they've already gone to the mikveh, they've already prayed.

Speaker 2:

But this isn't necessarily one who sends away the Almighty. I mean like this.

Speaker 1:

The Rama says specifically, this is the Ten Days of Repentance are even better. But in public, this fits very well with what you just said, that the Ten Days of Repentance already has a public. But when the people make teshuva, **"and whenever they do teshuva crying out with a whole heart, they are answered, as it says 'For what great nation has a God so near to it as Hashem our God whenever we call to Him.'"** The Almighty is eternal, when one calls Him He's eternal. If one takes together the people, "we call to Him," that when one takes together the people and makes a day of prayer, a day of teshuva, then it's as good as the Ten Days of Repentance. There's no difference.

Speaker 2:

Ah, it says "whenever we call to Him." When is "we call to Him"? Publicly. Publicly one can make this "we call to Him" any time. An individual is harder, because the education of a person alone, to break through the environment all around.

Speaker 1:

What doesn't fit? That the Rambam spoke about the Ten Days of Repentance. Now he says, the peak, the best teshuva is Yom Kippur.

Law 10: Yom Kippur

Speaker 1:

"And on Yom Kippur it is a time of teshuva for all, for the individual and for the public, and it is the end of forgiveness and pardon for Israel." This is the end of the forgiveness and pardon for Israel.

I think so because they learned earlier that teshuva begins the process of being exempted from the sin, and Yom Kippur finishes it. I once interpreted, "end" is a deadline. One must always, when will I go do teshuva? Tomorrow, tomorrow teshuva, one day I'll do teshuva. The Sefer HaChinuch says that a person accumulates and accumulates, and then he can't, he becomes a dictator, he becomes, the burden lies on him. This is the day that becomes a deadline. This is the end. The end of forgiveness and pardon, this is the end.

Speaker 2:

Okay, these are two good interpretations. The end of forgiveness and pardon, this is the language of the Gemara in Yoma. This is in the piyutim (liturgical poems), yes.

Speaker 1:

But I say, we have a good interpretation, because this is the main thing, that it's suspended until Yom Kippur, so this is the end.

"Therefore all are obligated to do teshuva and confess on Yom Kippur." Everyone is obligated to do teshuva and confess on Yom Kippur. Ah, perhaps to do teshuva through confessing. So then will be answered what we struggled with earlier. The language means whoever says viduy, because viduy means that he wants to do teshuva, but it doesn't mean that he makes a complete teshuva etc.

Discussion: Why "All Are Obligated"?**Speaker 2:**

And again, how does he learn "therefore all are obligated"? Why are all obligated? If he did other exemptions?

Speaker 1:

Ah, viduy is different. Viduy is different. Everything depends on teshuva. In the time of teshuva one says viduy, because viduy is what makes teshuva, you're accepting to return. Something like that.

It's important, I think, grab it, this is the... how does one say? Now there's a sale on pants, grab it, everyone should buy pants. He says, the end of forgiveness and pardon means it's the last day of the Ten Days of Repentance. He said that the Ten Days of Repentance are important. He says, this is the end of the Ten Days of Repentance.

Speaker 2:

Why specifically about this? I mean... okay.

Law 11: The Order of Viduy on Yom Kippur**Speaker 1:**

Therefore all are obligated... yes, we spoke. Because everyone must do teshuva and say viduy on Yom Kippur.

"The mitzvah of vidui (confession) on Yom Kippur, that one should say it on the eve of the day before eating." The mitzvah is that on erev Yom (the eve of the day), when Yom Kippur comes in, at the end of the day of erev Yom Kippur, still before eating. Why before eating? **"Lest he choke at the meal before he confesses."** Perhaps he will be choked at the meal before he confesses, and he hasn't done teshuva (repentance).

It's a beautiful... it's actually an interesting thing, because he won't have Yom Kippur, but he will have a yom hamita (day of death), the person who will, God forbid, be choked. But the Rabbis wanted teshuva beforehand. Therefore one says vidui at mincha. If he doesn't eat, perhaps he might choke. Choke doesn't mean he will die, it could be that he will become sick, he will be in danger. I don't know what could even happen. I can think, because one eats that meal when one is crying and one is in teshuva, not a meal that one eats with liveliness. One can choke.

He says further, **"And even though he confessed before eating, he repeats and confesses on the night of Yom Kippur at maariv."** At night one does vidui again. Why? Because now it's truly Yom Kippur, whereas before it was only

a preparation for Yom Kippur, now it's Yom Kippur itself. **"And he repeats and confesses at shacharit and at musaf and at mincha and at neilah."**

Discussion: Why Do We Repeat Vidui So Many Times?**Speaker 2:**

What's the explanation? I mean it's because perhaps he sinned in between.

Speaker 1:

But you said before tzaaka (crying out). I see that it has something to do with tzaaka. Every tefilla (prayer) is also tzaaka. You said tzaaka with teshuva work very well together. So every time there is a tzaaka, a tefilla, one also does vidui?

Speaker 2:

Why does it say one does it again? Yes, but why? Why should one confess so many times? We're disturbed by Yom Kippur, one says the entire vidui, I've already heard it. Nu, what do you want? Why are you pursuing? There must be a huge reason for this. I think perhaps he sinned in between. I don't know clearly.

Speaker 1:

I think one needs to understand why tzaaka helps for teshuva. If tzaaka helps for teshuva... No, you don't mean tzaaka, you mean vidui. I'm telling you again, again, again. Every time one does tzaaka again, one does teshuva again, one does vidui again. Exactly why, one needs to understand. But I'm saying, it has something to do with the fact that tzaaka helps for teshuva.

Speaker 2:

Ah, very good. If teshuva gemura (complete repentance), teshuva gemura one only needs to say vidui once. But on Yom Kippur one does, one says vidui so many times, kuli hai v'ulai (all this and perhaps) that a person should grasp that he won't sin anymore.

It could also be that tzaaka isn't - every tefilla isn't a tzaaka. Tzaaka is basically a tefilla that has gone, there is in it a tzaaka. Tzaaka means when a person cries out. Every time you daven, what you do, you try. Perhaps one of them will be a tzaaka, which is then besides a vidui also. That is more than tzaaka.

Speaker 1:

You mean to say because it says teshuva and tzaaka?

Speaker 2:

Okay, I want to say, I want to stay with my explanation. That on Yom Kippur one doesn't, one says on Yom Kippur the viduis so many times, perhaps kuli hai v'ulai it should help. The Gemara says, "Perhaps something of sin will happen to him in the meantime." It happens that on Yom Kippur itself he should have sinned. It's like the Rebbe Reb Elimelech's story. Yes. I don't know. It's not clear. Okay. Further. If someone knows for certain that he didn't sin on Yom Kippur, perhaps he doesn't need vidui so many times.

Speaker 1:

I don't know.

Alright, let's go further.

The Place of Vidui in Prayer**Speaker 1:**

My son says like this, says the Rema, **"An individual after his prayer"**, every individual at the end of the Shemoneh

Esrei there is a vidui, **"and the shaliach tzibur (prayer leader) in the middle of his prayer in the fourth blessing."** Because we conduct ourselves that the shaliach tzibur says it after davening. No, no. Ah, yes, somewhere in the middle of davening. Every Kippur, every... I say also in the middle of the Shemoneh Esrei.

Law 11 (Continued): The Text of Vidui and Its Place in Prayer

Yes, I don't know. Not clear. Okay.

If someone knows for certain that he didn't sin on Yom Kippur, perhaps he doesn't need to say vidui so many times. I don't know. Alright, let's go further.

The Place of Vidui in Prayer — Individual and Shaliach Tzibur

Further with the questions. The Rambam says, **"An individual after his prayer"**. The individual, at the end of the Shemoneh Esrei, there is a vidui. **"And the shaliach tzibur in the middle of his prayer in the fourth blessing"**. Interesting. By us we conduct ourselves that the shaliach tzibur says it after davening. Ah, yes, somewhere in the middle of davening, Yom Kippur, yes. In the middle of the Shemoneh Esrei.

The Essential Text of Vidui — "Aval Chatanu"

The Rambam says like this: **"And the vidui that all of Israel are accustomed to is 'Aval chatanu' etc., and this is the essence of vidui"**. The Rambam says, the essential text has become to say "Aval" (but). The truth is, one thing is, I'm not like the one who says "I have not sinned," rather "But we and our fathers have sinned." And this is enough, "and this is the essence of vidui."

You see clearly, and the law states earlier that one must say when he reviews the entire text. That speaks of the idea of teshuva. On Yom Kippur, one says chatati (I have sinned), this is the essential vidui, and one fulfills the obligation. It says in the Gemara, meaning if you extend it, you say "Al chet" etc., but this is no longer indispensable.

Repeating Vidui for Past Sins

The Rambam says further, **"Sins that he confessed for on this Yom Kippur, even though he stands in his repentance"** — these sins he confessed for one year on Yom Kippur, what happens next year? This year he didn't sin with these sins. He says, one says it again, **"he repeats and confesses for them on another Yom Kippur"**. This is the reason why one says so many "Al chets," because even sins that one only committed once, one says it every time. Even if someone truly did teshuva, **"as it says 'For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.'"** A person should always remember, my transgressions I know, and my sins are always in front of me.

Law 12: Teshuva Between Man and His Fellow

Okay, now we're going to learn about teshuva between man and his fellow. A very important part of teshuva.

The Distinction Between Sins Between Man and God and Between Man and His Fellow

The Rambam says, **"Neither teshuva nor Yom Kippur atone except for sins between man and God, such as one who ate something forbidden or had forbidden relations and the like, these are sins between man and God. But sins between man and his fellow, one who injures his fellow, or curses his fellow, or one**

who stole from him even a perutah's worth, are never forgiven until he gives his fellow what he owes him".

One who injures must give him damages, pain, medical costs, loss of time, and embarrassment, and appease him and ask from him. This is an extra thing, yes? The Rambam says even if he returned to him what he owes him, he must appease him and ask from him that he forgive him.

Innovation — Forgiving Means Befriending Again

See what a great innovation here, that a person has the power to forgive. He paid him, but the person has something... he's still angry. It could be that someone hit someone, he paid him his debts. Yes, but who says I have such a thing as mechila (forgiveness) that he should be my friend? I gave it back to him. Yes, yes, one must befriend him again. This is the innovation, forgiving means one must befriend him again, he shouldn't be an enemy.

Law 13: Appeasement Even With Words

The Rambam says, even if his fellow didn't sin against him except with words, even if he only pained him with words, he must appease him, he must appease him, and approach him, and approach, until he forgives him. Approach, that sounds flat. He should beg him, he should beg him, he should beg him, again and again until he forgives him.

Law 14: The Process of Appeasement

Bringing Rows of People

And if his fellow is not appeased to forgive him, he brings to him a row of three people from his friends, and they approach him and ask from him. This doesn't mean one should make a ritual. The Rambam says just like when a person wants someone to lend him money, he meets acquaintances and he negotiates, he makes sure to become his friend again. He should use his political connections. He shouldn't go to the police for this matter, but what is the standard? He calls him, he brings his friends to call. They tell him that he really didn't mean it, they tell him that he's his friend.

If they don't appease him, he brings him a second and third. He brings him even greater people. If he doesn't want, he leaves him and goes, and the one who didn't forgive is the sinner. Then you've done your part, and the one who doesn't forgive, that's already his problem, he is the sinner. And he must beg him.

By a Rabbi — A Thousand Times

A person has a limit how much he must beg someone. But if it was his rabbi, if it's his rabbi, his teacher, here we mean simply one from whom he learned Torah, no? He goes and comes even a thousand times until he forgives him. He must forgive him more and more. But the rabbi is always right. It could be, just to be clear, one answers that it doesn't mean, it means why is the one who shouldn't forgive him?

Why the One Who Doesn't Forgive Is a Sinner

Because the other one humbled himself to you, it's not simple that he begs "forgive me."

"Forgive me" doesn't mean anything.

It means that he appeases, he explains that he didn't mean it, he'll go further, he'll be better, etc.

And so the other one holds back, he insulted you, so why are you being stubborn?

That's the point, yes?

It's not simply that there's an obligation to forgive, it's after forgiving.

Law 15: The Obligation to Be Easy to Appease

Yes, this the Rambam says, this the Rambam says that one must forgive.

It Is Forbidden to Be Cruel

"It is forbidden for a person", yes, says the Rambam, **"it is forbidden for a person to be cruel and not be appeased."**

A person may not be cruel and vengeful and bear a grudge, hold the hatred, "and not be appeased."

"Rather he should be easy to appease", he should be easy to appease, to let himself be begged, **"and hard to anger",** and hard to anger.

The Rambam says, **"And when the sinner asks him to forgive",** when the person who sinned against him asks him to forgive him, **"he should forgive with a whole heart and a willing soul",** he should forgive with a whole heart and with a soul that is willing, he should be willing, he should...

Yes.

"And even if he troubled him and did much to him", even if the person pained him greatly and did much against him, **"he should not take revenge or bear a grudge",** he should not be vengeful and he should not bear... hold the hatred in his heart.

The Way of the Seed of Israel — Forgiveness Is a Jewish Trait

The Rambam says, **"And this is the way of the seed of Israel",** this is the way that Jewish children, yes, it's one of the signs of Jews, yes, these are the signs of the seed of Israel, **"and their upright heart",** this is the way that Jewish hearts are.

"But the nations", but not so the non-Jews, **"uncircumcised of heart",** the gentiles are uncircumcised of heart, as it says in halacha that when someone says "I am forbidden to benefit from the uncircumcised," he is permitted with uncircumcised Jews and forbidden with gentiles, because the gentiles are the true uncircumcised, uncircumcised of heart, they are blocked.

"Rather their wrath they keep forever", their wrath, their fierce anger, their vengeance, their anger is forever.

Proof from the Gibeonites

And regarding the Gibeonites who pretended they were Jews, what was the sign to know they weren't Jews?

Because one saw that they don't have Jewish traits.

And they don't forgive, "because they didn't forgive and weren't appeased." But seeing that the Gibeonites were learning among the children of Israel. Do you remember the story that was with the Gibeonites with Saul's children? They said that one should hang the children of Saul, because Saul killed the Gibeonites. And they said that the revenge should be to hang his children. And the children of Israel begged them with mercy, and they actually did so. But the Gemara says, on this stands the verse "and the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel." The Gemara understands in the Gemara that a Jew wouldn't have done so. Even if one killed an entire group, he would have forgiven. It's not a Jewish trait.

Note — Against a Mistaken Reasoning

I once heard an argument. There are people who say that gentile morality says one should forgive for hatred, and Jewish morality says one should take revenge. Here it says exactly the opposite. The Gibeonites, Jewish morality... Gibeonite is "they knew no mercy." Jewish morality, Jewish ethics, is to forgive.

Law 16: When the Injured Party Has Died

Vidui at the Grave

What does the living heir do? **"He brings ten people and stands them at his grave".** One brings a minyan. Because earlier it also came out to ten people, because earlier one had to bring three times three people, and together with the injured party is ten. Here you have a concept of a minyan. But here, the first one is dead, one needs ten people. And **"stands them at his grave",** one brings him to the grave, **"and says before them",** one says **"I have sinned to Hashem, God of Israel, and to so-and-so whom I did such and such to him".** It's very interesting, because in place, it's a concept of teshuva. I think it's more from the public side. Everyone knows he killed him. So it's until one appeases the regret of that person's honor. Yes, your honor, the other... Yes.

Returning Money to the Heirs

The money of his fellow, his monetary value, doesn't help. It's not enough that he should return the honor. To his heirs, he must return the money to the heirs. And if he had no heir, if he has no heir, or he didn't know who his heir is, or he doesn't know who the heir is, he leaves it with the beit din (rabbinical court), he should leave the money with the beit din. Like the law when someone robbed someone. If one robbed from the public, one must do it for public needs. One doesn't need to know who all the public are.

Discussion — Why Beit Din?

And I hear that if you will put it in beit din, it's certain that the beit din won't know who is the heir, and if not, they will be left with the money, then the beit din can probably bring it to me. I have a beit din. How certain. Therefore it's good when someone has advertised that he's going, openly, that he's going to take the money from whom you robbed, so everyone can run to give themselves. Yes. The point is very good.

But so it says in the Gemara, that if someone robbed someone and there truly are no heirs, he gives it to the beit din, and so he fulfills his obligation. It's very interesting, because here, here, it's interesting, because where does this come in? That in such a case, it's enough that you confess before the Almighty. That as it were, the whole thing of appeasing the other is as long as that person lives. But that person has died. But you see it's not so. You see there's a concept of between man and his fellow also. As it were, it's a social thing. Paining another person is a social thing. If the other doesn't live, I've already met others of mine and appeased his friends and confessed. But it's not so, because perhaps the whole world knows that you're fighting. You see that...

Story — The Chassid Who Approached His Rabbi

Okay, where do we see this in the story? That one of the chassidim approached his rabbi, and he sent him to his grave further. Why? Because all the chassidim are fighting. All that one's friends are fighting with you because of this, so. So, you do teshuva among Jews. It's not work, it's not "magic" that one goes to that one's grave.

Summary — Structure of Chapter 2

Okay. This is until here is chapter 2. It's very interesting. The second, the laws between man and his fellow come in regarding Yom Kippur. Where does it come in exactly, laws of teshuva between man and his fellow? It's also teshuva, yes. There is teshuva between man and God, and there is teshuva between man and his fellow. Okay.