

Laws of Repentance, Chapter 7 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of the Shiur — Hilchos Teshuva Chapter 7

General Introduction to the Chapter

Chapters 1-4 dealt with the fundamental laws of teshuva (repentance) — viduy (confession), the act of teshuva, what prevents teshuva, beinoni/tzaddik, etc. **Chapters 5-6** dealt with the foundation of free will — "hakol nasun lo" (everything is given to him), that a person has control over his actions.

Innovation in understanding Chapter 7: Chapter 7 enters into a **deeper, broader view of teshuva** — not just "commit a sin, say viduy," but **the complete transformation of a person's life:** from a rasha (wicked person) to a tzaddik (righteous person), from youth until death. Previously, the Rambam spoke about **teshuva from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur** (the specific act); now he speaks about **teshuva from Yom Kippur to Rosh Hashana** — meaning what it means to **live with teshuva**, or even more — **teshuva from creation to burial**, the entire life trajectory.

It has been noted that the chapter can appear like a collection of statements from Chazal and praise of teshuva. But the Rambam "didn't have time to just collect random statements from Chazal" — he always has a narrative. The structure is similar to **Hilchos Deos**: first the fundamentals, then important foundations, statements from Chazal, laws in Torah she'baal peh about teshuva, which can only be covered after understanding the fundamentals (including free will).

Halacha 1 — "Since every person has free will, let a person strive to do teshuva"

The Rambam's Words

"Since every person has free will as we have explained, let a person strive to do teshuva and to cleanse his hands from his sins."

Simple Meaning

Just as we have explained in chapters 5-6 that a person has control over his actions, he cannot say "I am forced" or "God made me sin." Therefore, he should strive to do teshuva.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **The language "yishtadel"** — not "ya'aseh" but "yishtadel," striving. This speaks to a person who thinks perhaps he is already so sunken in sin that he can no longer get out. The Rambam says: **Make an attempt, do some actions, you will see that you can.** "It's not yet over."

2. **"Lena'er kapav mechata'av"** — the language comes from Yeshaya/Tehillim (26:6) "erchatz benikyon kapai" (I will wash my hands in purity). "Kapayim" (hands) is usually an image for **theft/monetary sin** — the hands are stained with sins. It is also connected to the language in the Ne'ila prayer "nechetanu lefanecha keyadeinu" (we sinned before You like our hands). A distinction is suggested: **"la'asos teshuva"** can

be between man and God, and **"lena'er kapav"** is more between man and his fellow (actual deeds).

Halacha 1 (continued) — "A person should see himself as if he is leaning toward death... and should not say when I grow old I will repent"

The Rambam's Words

"Therefore, a person should see himself as if he is leaning toward death, and perhaps he will die at this moment and be found standing in his sin. Therefore, he should repent from his sins immediately, and should not say when I grow old I will repent, for perhaps he will die before he grows old."

Simple Meaning

A person should view himself as if he is approaching death, he should do teshuva immediately and not wait to grow old.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **Two "yir'eh es atzmo"**: This is a **second** "yir'eh es atzmo" — the first (chapter 3) is "yir'eh es atzmo ke'ilu chetzvo chayav vechetzvo zakai" (see himself as if half guilty and half meritorious); here it is "yir'eh es atzmo ke'ilu noteh lamus" (see himself as if leaning toward death). Both are tools to motivate teshuva, but from different directions.

2. **The source in Chazal**: "Al tomar lekshe'efneh eshneh" (don't say when I have free time I will study) (Avos 2:4) and "shuv yom echad lifnei misascha" (repent one day before your death) (Shabbos 153a).

3. **"Hu sheShlomo amar bechachmaso"** — the Rambam says "bechachmaso" (in his wisdom) because Shlomo is **not a prophet** according to the Rambam, but a **sage**. The Rambam counted Shlomo among the sages, not among the prophets. Three possible interpretations of "bechachmaso" are offered: (a) in his book of wisdom (Koheles); (b) with his wisdom as a sage; (c) in a clever way — he doesn't say it clearly, but with a beautiful parable.

4. **"Bechol eis yihyu vegadecha levanim veshemen al roshcha al yechar" (Koheles 9:8)**: The Rambam interprets "vegadecha levanim" as a hint to **clean character traits** — always be ready, not just erev Shabbos. It is also suggested that "vegadecha levanim" can mean **burial shrouds** — white garments like one goes with a deceased person, like a kittel, and "shemen" can be **anointing oil in the preparation for burial** — a person should always think that he is going to die. This is **exactly the language of the Gemara in Shabbos** (153a) which brings the same verse. The main point: **"bechol eis"** — always, not just when one grows old.

5. **[Digression: Shlomo's books in the Rambam's structure:]** Hilchos Deos is built on many verses from **Sefer Mishlei** (Shlomo's wisdom in youth), and Hilchos Teshuva is built on much of **Koheles** (Shlomo's wisdom in old age).

According to one approach in the Midrash, when Shlomo grew old he said Koheles — his "takeaway" from life.

Halacha 3 — "Do not say that teshuva is only from sins that involve action"

The Rambam's Words

"Do not say that teshuva is only from sins that involve action such as promiscuity, theft, and robbery. Just as a person must repent from these, so must he search for the bad character traits he has and repent from them — from anger, from hatred, from jealousy, from competition, from mockery, from pursuit of money, from pursuit of honor, from pursuit of food and the like. And these sins that do not involve action are more severe than those that involve action, because when a person is immersed in these it is difficult for him to separate."

Simple Meaning

Teshuva is not only from sins with an action, but also from bad character traits/opinions. Sins without action are harder to fight because one becomes immersed in them.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **Connection to free will:** This is an important practical application of the foundation of chapters 5-6. A person might think: "Reshus kol adam nesuna lo" — yes, on **actions** I have free will (to go to a prostitute, to steal). But on **character traits** — "I'm stuck, I'm jealous, what should I do?" The Rambam answers: **The free will also applies to character traits** — he explicitly said "lehatos da'ato," that free will includes character traits as well.

2. **Kin'ah vs. tacharut:** "Kin'ah" is jealousy; "tacharut" is competition — the goal/result that comes from jealousy, but not exactly the same thing. The term "tacharut" also appears in the Rambam when he describes the future "she'ein bo kin'ah vetacharut" (when people become like angels of service).

3. **Source of the list:** The Rambam's list is apparently his own compilation, not directly from a statement in Chazal. It also doesn't follow the order of Hilchos Deos. Anger and jealousy are there, but pursuit of money is not in the previous order.

4. **Between man and his fellow vs. between man and himself:** Most of the items in the list (anger, jealousy, competition, mockery) are interpersonal matters, but pursuit of money and pursuit of food are more between man and himself. Pursuit of money is interpreted as "ambition" — chasing after money.

5. **"Ya'azov rasha darko ve'ish on machshevosav" — proof from a verse:** The verse is brought as support. Both parts of the verse — "darko" and "machshevosav" — do not speak of actions. "Darko" means habits (behaviors, practices), not just individual actions. The Rambam himself in Hilchos Deos brings the entire concept of "drachim" (ways). This is the main verse of teshuva that the Rambam brings in chapter 2 — abandoning sin means abandoning one's "ways," not just one's actions.

6. **Rashi's question — "Does a wicked person have a way?":** Rashi asks on the verse: does a wicked person have a "way"? Does a swamp/mud have a path? But the Rambam says yes — a wicked person has a way, meaning a bad habit. It is

noted that "derech oniyah belev yam" (the way of a ship in the heart of the sea) also has meaning in this context.

7. **Teshuva on character traits — the practical path:** "Character traits" — what kind of person he is — is not an action, but teshuva means he can actually change. The path of teshuva on character traits is as the Rambam explained in Hilchos Deos: go in the middle path, and first go to the other extreme in order to reach the middle.

8. **Connection to Yom Kippur:** The Rambam says about Yom Kippur "she'ein bo kin'ah vetacharut" — people become like angels of service. This connects to the fact that teshuva from character traits (jealousy, competition) is part of the transformation that teshuva must bring.

Halacha 4 — The Excellence of the Ba'al Teshuva

The Rambam's Words

"A ba'al teshuva should not imagine that he is distant from the level of the righteous... Rather, he is beloved and cherished before the Creator as if he had never sinned. Moreover, his reward is great, for he tasted the taste of sin and separated from it and conquered his evil inclination."

Simple Meaning

A ba'al teshuva should not think he is far from the righteous. He is beloved by the Creator like one who never sinned. Moreover — his reward is greater because he tasted sin and separated from it.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **"Al yidameh" vs. "al yomar":** Previously the Rambam said "al yomar" (he should not say), here he says "al yidameh" — he should not think, not have an imagination/conception. "Nechmad" is interpreted from the language of chemdah ("lo tachmod") — God desires him, wants him.

2. **Contradiction with Hilchos Deos/Shemonah Perakim — kovesh es yitzro vs. me'uleh:** In Hilchos Deos and Shemonah Perakim the Rambam says that a "me'uleh" — one who has no desire at all to sin — is better than a "kovesh es yitzro" who restrains himself. But here it appears that the ba'al teshuva who "kavash es yitzro" has a greater level than a complete tzaddik.

3. **Distinction between level and reward — rejected:** It is suggested that perhaps there is a distinction between "ma'alah" (what level he is) and "sachar" (reward). But this is rejected — the Rambam explicitly counts both levels and reward.

4. **The main answer — the ba'al teshuva has truly changed:** Here the Rambam is not speaking of someone who still has a wild evil inclination and restrains himself. Here he speaks of someone who yesterday was a person with bad character traits, and now he has changed internally — he no longer has the bad character traits. He is not "kovesh es yitzro" now, he has changed internally. This is different from the case in Shemonah Perakim where someone still has a bad desire and just restrains himself. The ba'al teshuva has both merits: he gets credit for stopping, and now he is a refined person.

5. **The parable with the rapist:** Someone who has a terrible desire to be a rapist and restrains himself — we don't say he is a great tzaddik for restraining himself. But someone who has

stopped wanting — certainly he gets credit. This is not the same problem as in Shemonah Perakim.

6. "Makom sheba'alei teshuva omdin" — level, not place: The Rambam brings the statement from Chazal "makom sheba'alei teshuva omdin ein tzaddikim gemurim yecholim la'amod bo" (the place where ba'alei teshuva stand, complete tzaddikim cannot stand). "Makom" means level/status, not a physical place — just as in Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah chapter 2 where "makom" by angels means level.

Halacha 4 (continued) — Great is teshuva that brings a person close to the Shechina

The Rambam's Words

"Great is teshuva that brings a person close to the Shechina, as it says 'Return, Israel, to Hashem your God,' and it says 'and you did not return to Me,' and it says 'If you return, Israel, says Hashem, to Me you shall return' — meaning if you return in teshuva, to Me you shall cling."

Simple Meaning

Teshuva brings the person close back to God. The verses show that "to Hashem" and "to Me you shall return" means that the ba'al teshuva comes right to God Himself and becomes attached to Him.

Innovations and Explanations

- The Rambam learns from the verse "veshavta ad Hashem Elokecha" (Devarim 30) that teshuva brings the person literally to God — "ad" means to God Himself. This is the foundation of the entire chapter — teshuva is not just a post-facto correction, but a transformation that overturns the person's entire relationship with God.

Halacha 4 (continued) — The Drastic Change of Teshuva: "Yesterday... and today"

The Rambam's Words

"Yesterday this one was hated before the Omnipresent, disgusting, distant, and abominable. And today he is beloved and cherished, close and a friend."

Simple Meaning

Before teshuva the person was hated, far, disgusting. After teshuva he is beloved, close, a friend.

Innovations and Explanations

- The change is drastic — from one extreme to the other extreme. This is more than what one would expect: the person has merely moved a bit, he looks at him doing a bit better — but God's reaction is a total reversal. This is precisely the "beauty" of teshuva — that the person truly becomes a better person, and God loves to do good things.

Halacha 4 (continued) — With the language that distances sinners, He brings close those who return

The Rambam's Words

"Therefore we find that with the language that the Holy One Blessed be He distances sinners, with it He brings close those who return, whether individuals or the community."

Simple Meaning

The same language that God uses to distance sinners, He uses to bring close ba'alei teshuva.

Innovations and Explanations

1. Verse from Hoshea: "And it shall be in the place where it was said to them 'you are not My people' — the same place where they were called "not My people," there they will be called "children of the living God." This shows that the same language is reversed.

2. Example of Yehoyachin (Yechanya): With Yehoyachin in his beginning, when he was bad, it says "write this man childless" — he will not have children. Also "if Konyahu son of Yehoyakim were a signet ring on My right hand, I would tear you off." But afterwards when he did teshuva in exile, it says about his grandson Zerubavel (son of She'altiel, a son of Yechanya): "I will take you Zerubavel... and make you like a signet ring" — God makes him into a signet ring, exactly the opposite language from what He said at the sin. The same coin language that was negative becomes positive.

Halacha 4 (continued) — Before teshuva mitzvos are not accepted

The Rambam's Words

"Yesterday this one was separated from Hashem God of Israel, as it says 'your iniquities were separating between you and your God.' He cries out and is not answered... and does mitzvos and they are thrown in his face, as it says 'who asked this of you to trample My courtyards'... 'add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat.'"

Simple Meaning

Before teshuva — the person is cut off from God, his prayer is not accepted, his mitzvos are thrown back in his face.

Innovations and Explanations

1. The verse "add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat" means: take your burnt offerings, throw them together with your sacrifices and eat them — God doesn't want your sacrifices without teshuva.

2. **[Digression: Haftarah of Parshas Tzav and Shabbos HaGadol:]** The verse "add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices" is from the haftarah of Parshas Tzav, which is almost never said, because Parshas Tzav almost always falls on Shabbos HaGadol. One of the reasons it was changed is because the haftarah of Parshas Tzav is a sharp haftarah against sacrifices — contradicting what is read in the parsha. Instead, we say the haftarah of Shabbos HaGadol: "And the offering of Yehuda and Yerushalayim will be pleasing to Hashem as in days of old" — the opposite: after teshuva, sacrifices become sweet again to God. The "Yom Hashem HaGadol" in the haftarah fits very well, because "ein Yisrael nig'alim ela biteshuva" — we speak here of teshuva, therefore "ve'arva laHashem," therefore there is a "great day" of teshuva.

Halacha 4 (continued) — After teshuva everything is accepted

The Rambam's Words

"And today he is attached to the Shechina, as it says 'and you who are attached to Hashem your God'... he cries out and is answered immediately, as it says 'and it shall be before they call I will answer'... and does

mitzvos and they are received with pleasure and joy, as it says 'for God has already accepted your deeds'... and it says 'and the offering of Yehuda and Yerushalayim will be pleasing to Hashem as in days of old and as in former years.'"

Simple Meaning

After teshuva — the person is attached to the Shechina, his prayer is answered immediately, his mitzvos are accepted with pleasure and joy.

Halacha 5 — Teshuva of the Community and Redemption

The Rambam's Words

"All the prophets commanded about teshuva, and Israel is only redeemed through teshuva. And the Torah has already promised that Israel will ultimately do teshuva at the end of their exile and immediately they will be redeemed." Verse: "And it shall be when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you shall take it to heart among all the nations where Hashem your God has driven you, and you shall return to Hashem your God..."

Simple Meaning

All the prophets aroused to teshuva. Jews are only redeemed through teshuva, and the Torah promised that the Jewish people will do teshuva at the end of exile.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **Transition from individual to community:** Until now it spoke of teshuvot hayachid — one person who does teshuva. Now the Rambam transitions to teshuvot haklal — the nation, the Jewish people.

2. **Prophets — their main role:** "All the prophets commanded about teshuva" — perhaps this is the main point of all prophecy. This fits with what the Rambam said earlier that "yorchah esum baderech" means that God sends prophets. Prophets other than Moshe cannot innovate any mitzvos — what can they do? Only arouse to teshuva on what Moshe Rabbeinu already said.

3. **"Ein Yisrael nig'alim ela biteshuva" — dispute of Tanna'im:** This is a dispute in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 97-98) — there were Tanna'im who said that redemption can come without teshuva. The Rambam rules that teshuva must be done. But he also says that the Torah promised that Jews will do teshuva — so it will ultimately happen.

4. **Contradiction with "reshus beyad adam" — answer:** If God promised that Jews will do teshuva, how does this fit with free will? The answer: as the Rambam said earlier by "va'avadum ve'inu osam" — the order is that one cannot remain in exile forever. But "Klal Yisrael" is a collective — there can be individuals who don't do teshuva. Every single person who will do teshuva, this is in his control and choice. No one will be forced.

5. **"Asher nasati lefanecha" — language of choice:** "Asher nasati lefanecha" is interpreted as "which I have given into your hand" — like by "re'eh anochi nosein lifneichem hayom beracha uklah," when it lies in your hand to choose. The Rambam perhaps wants to say that the order is: first comes blessing, then curse, and this brings to "vehashevosa el levavecha" — teshuva.

6. **The order of Parshas Nitzavim:** First comes blessing, then "vehashevosa el levavecha" — this brings to teshuva, then "veshavta ad Hashem Elokecha" — the person does teshuva, and then "veshav Hashem Elokecha es shevuscha verichameha veshav vekibetzcha" — God accepts the teshuva and brings the redemption. The Rambam's approach that "ein Yisrael nig'alim ela biteshuva" stems from this order in Parshas Nitzavim.

7. **"Veshavta ad Hashem Elokecha":** The Rambam will derive from the level "ad Hashem Elokecha" — that a person comes to God. Later he will say "veshamata bekolo" — "kol Hashem" is "nachal nove'a mekor chochma" (a flowing stream, source of wisdom).

Halacha 6 — Ba'alei teshuva's way is to be humble and modest

The Rambam's Words

"Ba'alei teshuva's way is to be exceedingly humble and modest."

Simple Meaning

Ba'alei teshuva conduct themselves with humility and modesty.

Innovations and Explanations

1. If the ba'al teshuva is already at the level of a complete tzaddik (as the Rambam said earlier), why must he conduct himself with humility? Because there is a distinction between his true level (complete tzaddik) and how he must conduct himself (humility and modesty). This is a "derech hamemitza" — the ba'al teshuva himself doesn't carry himself with "big baggage" (great pretensions), but another person must give him "big baggage" (honor).

2. The ba'al teshuva hears when someone says to him "yesterday" (yesterday you were such and such), and he is not insulted — on the contrary, he rejoices. What is the joy? He remembers where he was, and what a long way he has come, how holy he is today. This fits with the language "yesterday" that the Rambam uses: earlier the Rambam said "yesterday" — yesterday he was hated, today beloved. The ba'al teshuva himself thinks about the "yesterday" and rejoices with the "today." But the one who says "yesterday" to shame — this is forbidden.

3. It is compared to the language in Hilchos Deos — the one who is insulted and the one who is not insulted. The ba'al teshuva hears the shame with humility, he is not insulted, and this itself is something that atones for sins.

Halacha 6 (continued) — The prohibition of verbal wrongdoing to a ba'al teshuva

The Rambam's Words

"If foolish people reproach them for their former deeds and say to them 'remember your former deeds'... they should not be insulted by them but should listen and rejoice, and know that this is a merit for them, for as long as they are embarrassed by their former deeds and ashamed of them — their merit is great and their level increases."

"And it is a complete sin to say to a ba'al teshuva 'remember your former deeds,' or to mention them in his presence to shame him, or to mention matters and subjects similar to them in order to remind him

of what he did — all is forbidden, and this is included in verbal wrongdoing that the Torah warned about."

Simple Meaning

When foolish people shame ba'alei teshuva with their previous deeds, they should not be insulted, but listen and rejoice, because the shame itself is a merit that increases their level. But from the other person's side — it is completely forbidden from the Torah under the prohibition of verbal wrongdoing.

Innovations and Explanations

1. **Double dynamic:** The Rambam sets up a double dynamic: from the ba'al teshuva's side — he should accept it with joy, because shame from previous sins is an atonement. But from the other person's side — it is completely forbidden. The ba'al teshuva's own shame is a merit; but the other person's shaming is a Torah violation.

2. **Three levels of prohibition:** The Rambam distinguishes three levels: (1) directly saying "remember your former deeds," (2) mentioning the sins in his presence to shame him, (3) even

just hinting at similar matters — all three are forbidden from the Torah under the prohibition of verbal wrongdoing.

3. **Innovation in the name of R' Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin:** The prohibition to remind a ba'al teshuva of his previous deeds is not only because one is bothering him — it is actually **not true**. He is literally not that person anymore. The Rambam himself said "**ani acher ve'eini oso ha'ish she'asa oson hama'asim**" (I am another and I am not that person who did those deeds) — teshuva means he becomes a new person. Therefore, whoever reminds him of his previous deeds, he is a **fool** and an **idiot** — he doesn't grasp what teshuva means, he doesn't understand that the ba'al teshuva is already a completely different person.

4. **Connection to the foundation of the entire chapter:** The prohibition of verbal wrongdoing by a ba'al teshuva has a deeper reason than just pain — it is a false statement, because through teshuva he is literally not the same person. This connects back to the foundation of the entire chapter — that teshuva creates an essential change in the person, and this is a beautiful conclusion to the chapter.

Full Transcript

Laws of Repentance Chapter 7 — Repentance from Birth to Death

Introduction: The Structure of Laws of Repentance

Speaker 1:

Gentlemen, we are going to learn Laws of Repentance Chapter 7.

It seems to me that we learned Laws of Repentance Chapters 1 through 4, actual Laws of Repentance, all the topics of repentance. After that we saw Chapters 5 and 6, the topic was "everything is given over to him," it seems that now the Rambam wants to draw certain conclusions that are not exactly built on the foundation of free will versus not free will, rather it is built on a broader or deeper look at what a person is, and consequently what repentance means.

In other words, Chapter 1 was mainly built on the idea that repentance means, he committed a sin, he must stop committing the sin. He didn't do a mitzvah, he must do the mitzvah. And we saw in Chapters 3 and 4 a bit more about habits, about what prevents repentance, about what must happen for a beinoni to become a tzaddik, and the like. But the main thing about repentance that we are accustomed to thinking about, the Rambam hasn't really said yet.

What is the main thing about repentance? The main thing about repentance is, there is a person who yesterday was a rasha or a beinoni, later he becomes a tzaddik. There is a life, an entire life from when he is a baby until when he dies, he begins not a good person, and in the end he became a tzaddik. Or he sinned in the middle and he becomes a tzaddik again. This kind of story of repentance the Rambam has never yet brought out, and it's much deeper or broader than simply saying, "commit a sin, say vidui, do repentance." It's something else that must be said.

I would perhaps say it with these words, that previously the Rambam spoke about repentance that is from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. Now he is going to speak about the repentance from Yom Kippur until Rosh Hashanah. That is,

the entire year after one has repented, what does it mean to live with repentance? What does it mean... he is going to speak about character traits that a person must undertake a complete repentance to do, and one should maintain the repentance.

But I would say very strongly, repentance from birth to death, more that kind of topic. It's true that it's from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur, but it's even more than that. It's not just one year. It's repentance from, as he will say, "before his death," he is going to enter into the whole thing. It's repentance that makes the person from when he was a boy and didn't understand, until the end of his days. It's more that kind of topic of repentance.

The entire chapter, if I can give such a definition, it seems a bit that the Rambam brings various topics, mussar, statements of Chazal, praise of repentance. I said that all of them revolve, almost all of them, revolve around the point of the transformation of repentance, yes, the reversal. That he was a rasha and became a tzaddik.

I would still place it in a somewhat larger category, like in Laws of Character Traits. First the Rambam said the essential essence of Laws of Character Traits, and afterwards he covered all topics, I don't mean all, but many important laws that have to do with character traits. Here too he covered the essentials of repentance, the essence of the mitzvah of repentance, afterwards what one must know to understand repentance, like free will. And here he is going to take other important foundations in repentance, which he holds that one must know, important statements of Chazal, important laws in the Oral Torah regarding repentance, which he also places here.

Speaker 2:

I don't agree with what you're saying, because the Rambam didn't have time to simply collect statements of Chazal. It seems that he does it, but he always has some narrative behind it. And also in Laws of Character Traits, I didn't understand it, but I think that there too he meant something.

Speaker 1:

I'm not saying he doesn't mean anything, certainly it's not just a collection, it has much more than that. But I'm saying, the actual structure is very similar to there, that after you already understand the essence, he's not going to place just a bunch of statements. First you should understand the essence and afterwards he can go to details. Laws, like in every, like in Laws of Shabbat there are many small details, there are also in Laws of Repentance details. Part of them are the details of the levels of repentance. But it's details that after you understand the essentials one can cover them.

Speaker 2:

Yes, but okay, we already had a disagreement. I think I was right.

Speaker 1:

No, I know, the humble one will not ask. But let's say this, but in practice, the Rambam has already added an entire foundation. Until now we learned, until Chapter 4, simple repentance. One didn't know any philosophy, any foundations of free will. Now one knows free will, there are certainly things that one can now better understand afterwards. I don't know what, but something one must understand.

Speaker 2:

Okay.

Law 1: Since Free Will is Given to Every Person — A Person Should Strive to Do Repentance

Speaker 1:

So the Rambam continues, as we have spoken.

Speaker 2:

No, I have a question, perhaps we should make some system where each of the listeners of the shiur can vote?

Speaker 1:

No, it's good this way. Do you know how I should make a star? Do you know how I should send money for matnat chaim and pitchiya?

Speaker 2:

No, in general, on the whole world like us. For the shiur, for the shiur.

Speaker 1:

No, for the coming year, after Parshat Nitzavim we will talk about the shiur extras. The Rambam says, okay, from the, this is the... the thing here.

Okay, the Rambam says this, **"Since free will is given to every person,"** as we have now in the last two chapters explained that a person has free will over his own actions, consequently I have no excuse, I cannot say I am forced, God made me sin. I have already given you the key in your hands, now use it. **"A person should strive,"** a person should make effort, do actions, strengthen himself **"on the good path to do repentance."** He should try. It could be that it's a bit harder, as a person might think, perhaps I am already so sunk in sin that I can no longer. He says, make effort, look, try, do some actions, you will see that you can. One can still try, it's not yet over.

"A person should strive to do repentance and to cleanse his hands from his sins," to shake off his hands from sins.

Speaker 2:

Yes, what is this language?

Speaker 1:

He says it's a language from a verse in Isaiah, to throw off, to shake off the hands. "I will wash my hands in cleanliness and surround Your altar, Hashem." To wash the hands from sins. I think that sins of the hands usually is an image for theft, for a matter of money. I think that the hands usually is an image of theft. As it says there in the Neilah prayer, "I will wash in cleanliness..."

Speaker 2:

Ah, you mean to say the "we have sinned before You with our hands"?

Speaker 1:

"We have sinned before You with our hands," the hands are smeared with sins. So to do repentance can mean like between man and God, but "to cleanse his hands from his sins" is like the hands should stop sinning. Okay.

Why Must One Do Repentance Now? — "Before His Death"

Speaker 2:

Why must one do repentance here? It's not like in Nitzavim.

Speaker 1:

Once when the Rambam also admits that one can no longer do repentance, is after one dies. But, but this is very important, because the Rambam says, let's understand, in the end he makes a great practical difference while one lives, because often one gets stuck. But in practice, what is the purpose of the whole thing? One should die in order to merit the World to Come. So consequently the Rambam says, as long as you still live, you can still be a person, you can still die and go to the World to Come. He will also say, for example, that a person finds himself thus, an old Jew.

What should I do now? I'm going to become a complete Jew now. Not that there is no World to Come, not that there isn't, but that is the great essence. So the Rambam continues, if so one should speak to old Jews.

Law 2: A Person Should See Himself As If Inclined Toward Death

Speaker 1:

Comes the next section, the Rambam says, **"Therefore a person should see himself as if inclined toward death."**

If this is the second "see himself," there is "see himself as if half guilty and half meritorious," and this "see himself as if inclined toward death." **"And perhaps he will die at this moment,"** perhaps he will die now, while he is in repentance, and he will not die in his sin. And therefore, **"let him return from his sins immediately, and let him not say when I grow old I will repent,"** this is the Chazal, "do not say when I have time I will study."

And Chazal also say, "repent one day before your death," **"perhaps he will die before he grows old,"** perhaps he will die before he grows old. Also there is that the Rambam rules the law that one should do repentance before Yom Kippur arrives, because perhaps he will die.

"At All Times Let Your Garments Be White" — Solomon's Wisdom

Speaker 1:

The Rambam says, "**This is what Solomon said in his wisdom,**" this is what Solomon says with his great wisdom. Solomon doesn't say it in prophecy, others say he was a prophet, others look at him as one of the prophets, but Solomon is not from the prophets. The Rambam counted Solomon among the sages. Solomon is the wise one, Solomon is his wisdom says. Perhaps "in his wisdom" means in his book of wisdom, not Solomon's wisdom. Solomon says with his wisdom, perhaps it means that it's a beautiful language of wisdom, because he doesn't say it clearly, he says it with such a beautiful parable, "**At all times let your garments be white.**" Perhaps this is what he means, he says it in a clever way.

He says, "**At all times let your garments be white, and let oil not be lacking on your head.**" How does the Rambam interpret this? That is, "your garments be white" is presumably a hint to having clean character traits, that is clean, proper things. You should not only be prepared with the nice clothes when Friday evening comes, it should always be clean, because it could be that now you will need to have the clean clothes. I think perhaps something else, like we go with a kittel on Pesach, one should go with white clothes, like one goes with a deceased. And also the anointing oil is in the arrangement of embalming, yes? So that a person should always think that he is going to die, he is already dressed in shrouds, one is already dressed in a white shirt, if one dies one should not have... It's exactly the language of the Gemara in Shabbat.

Speaker 2:

Yes. "Also Solomon in his wisdom said at all times let your garments be white."

Speaker 1:

The Gemara already brings this verse too.

But the word is "at all times," not only when... in the future a person must go already, but a person must always, perhaps they will invite him now to a feast.

Speaker 2:

Heaven forbid. Ah, this is the verse from... it should not be lacking, always have an extra "let your garments be white," a person should always be ready, a person should not wait for...

Speaker 1:

By the way, Laws of Character Traits was built on much of Solomon from the Book of Proverbs, Laws of Repentance is also built on much of Kohelet, something already learned in Kohelet, in the end there it says thus, that when Solomon was old he said Kohelet, yes? He said his conclusion, yes? It's one opinion in the Midrash perhaps.

Law 3: Do Not Say That There is Only Repentance from Sins That Involve Action

Speaker 1:

Okay, the Rambam says... now one will see that it's a very important Rambam, very important. I think that the entire Laws of Repentance was really coming to this law. That is because like before, before one learned about sins that involve action, about not doing sins, now one is going to learn the Rambam, yes?

The Rambam says: "**Do not say,**" you should not say, "**that there is only repentance from sins that involve action,**" that repentance is mainly only... It could also be, you

said before that a person has free will over his actions, "free will is given to every person," a person says yes, I know, over actions. I can choose to go to a prostitute, go steal, on that I have actual free will.

But other things that are more character traits, I am stuck, I am very jealous, what should I do? The Rambam says: "**Just as a person must repent from these,**" no, just as a person must do repentance from these things, from action where there is an action... yes, but he said explicitly, he meant to incline his mind, that the free will means on mind. "**So too he must search,**" he must look "**in the bad character traits that he has,**" in his bad character traits that he has, "**and repent from them,**" and do repentance from these things, "**from anger,**" from anger, "**from hatred,**" from holding hatred toward people, "**from jealousy,**" from jealousy, "**from competition,**" from competition.

Speaker 2:

Competition, it seems that it's not the exact same thing, rather the purpose that comes from jealousy.

Speaker 1:

And on Yom Kippur the Rambam says "that there is no jealousy and competition in it." How? People become like the ministering angels. What does it say in the Rambam? Did I remember correctly? Did I just remember such a language?

Jealousy and Competition – Clarification of Terms

Speaker 1: Jealousy and competition, it seems that it's not the exact same thing.

Speaker 2: What is this competition?

Speaker 1: It comes from jealousy.

Speaker 2: Did we have the language competition before?

Speaker 1: I don't know what this competition is. In Laws of Repentance the Rambam says "that there is no jealousy and competition in it."

Speaker 2: How?

Speaker 1: That people become like the ministering angels.

Speaker 2: What does it say in the Rambam?

Speaker 1: I remembered correctly, but I didn't remember that there is this language in the Megillah it says "support of friends." Okay, I don't know exactly what this is, competition. Presumably competition means competing with the other, in today's language.

Speaker 2: Yes.

The Rambam's List of Sins That Don't Involve Action

Speaker 1: "And from mockery," means mocking people, making fun and joking about people. "And from pursuit of money," the Rambam says here his own list.

Speaker 2: This is perhaps certain Chazal?

Speaker 1: Certainly his own list, no? I don't know where this list comes from. It's not according to the order of the character traits that he said before in Laws of Character Traits. Perhaps it's a bit similar, anger and jealousy is, but pursuit of money is...

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Jealousy and competition is one language. I don't know.

Okay, "and honor." In fact pursuit of money and honor, yes. Ah, pursuing money and honor, very good. "And from pursuit

of food, and the like." Pursuing.

Speaker 2: Pursuit of food is the only one that is not...

Speaker 1: All of these are very very similar interpersonal things: getting angry at people, jealousy, competition, mocking people. Pursuit of money is not interpersonal.

Speaker 2: What? Pursuit of money?

Speaker 1: Yes. One wants I to compete, Rebbe, fight, fight for his money, but yes. This means ambition, like pursuit of money.

The Verse "Let the Wicked Forsake His Way" — Proof of Repentance on Character Traits

Speaker 1: Okay, "from all of these one must return in repentance." From all these things a person must do repentance. The Rambam continues, "And these sins, that the sins that don't involve action, are more difficult than those that involve action." The sins that don't have action are even worse, not harder, rather difficult is harder, one must work harder to do repentance. Why? "Because when a person is immersed in these, it is difficult for him to separate." On these things a person can sink in. Actions are, when one does it, one does it, and when one doesn't do it, one doesn't do it. But things that have to do with thought or with character traits, one becomes sunk in this, and it's very hard to separate oneself.

And I wanted to say that this is stated in a verse, "Let the wicked forsake his way," a person should abandon his ways, doesn't mean simple actions, "and the man of iniquity his thoughts."

His way is not just his way, his way is habit. The Rambam in Laws of Character Traits brings the entire discussion of ways. "And the man of iniquity his thoughts," but the essence he means the thoughts.

Speaker 2: Both, both.

Speaker 1: Both of them don't speak of actions, neither of them speaks of actions. Both, this is the main verse of repentance that the Rambam brings in Chapter 2, all these languages where one learns the principles of repentance from abandoning sin, it says "his way," not just his actions, rather he should abandon his ways.

Rashi's Question — Does a Wicked Person Have a Way?

Speaker 1: Why did Rashi have to ask this question? Rashi asked the question, the verse, does a wicked person have a way? A wicked person, he said, does a swamp, does mud have a way? But the Rambam says that a wicked person has a way, he has a bad habit. "A way in the heart of the sea, the way of a ship in the heart of the sea" has something a ship, yes.

Okay, very good. Here one sees that in the words apparently character traits, that character traits is not an action, character traits is what kind of person he is, but repentance means that he can actually yes, he will return to good ways and the like. And how to do repentance he calculated in Laws of Character Traits, to go in the middle path, and come go to the other extreme to be able to arrive at the middle path.

Law 4 — The Level of the Penitent

The Rambam's Words — The Penitent is Beloved and Cherished

Speaker 1: The Rambam says further, "al yidameh ba'al teshuva", a ba'al teshuva should not think. Earlier he said "al yomar", he shouldn't even say, "shehu merukhak

mima'alat hatzadikim". He shouldn't think, he shouldn't suspect, he shouldn't have a dimyon (imagination), the Ribbono Shel Olam is drawn to him.

Speaker 2: Nehmad means, yes, from the language of khemda (desire), "lo takhmod".

Speaker 1: He is as if lo khata me'olam (he never sinned), he is like a newborn, he is like someone who never sinned, like a tzadik gamur (complete righteous person). The Ribbono Shel Olam loves him so much that He wants him never to sin, that's what he means to say.

Speaker 2: Yes, that's what he says.

Speaker 1: The Ribbono Shel Olam has no grudges against him.

Velo od, ela sheskharo harbeh. His reward is even more, very great.

Speaker 2: Even more!

Speaker 1: I'll tell you the statement clearly, I'll say it now. "Harbeh" is great. **Shehrei ta'am ta'am hakhet**, he has already tasted the taste of sin, **uferesh mimenu**, he separated from it, **vekhavash et yitzro**, he conquered his yetzer hara (evil inclination). This is greater than the ba'al teshuva from the righteousness that he never had. One must think about the me'uleh (excellent one) and the moshel benefsho (one who rules over his soul).

Discussion: Contradiction with Hilkhhot De'ot — Kovesh et Yitzro vs. Me'uleh

Speaker 2: No, the Rambam doesn't hold that way. But there is a difference between ma'aloh (level) and sakhar (reward). Ma'aloh means what level he is at.

Speaker 1: No, the Rambam is going to explicitly calculate ma'alot and sakhar. No, it can't be. Apparently one must either say that there's a contradiction in the Rambam, or the Rambam in other places says that the kovesh et yitzro is not a ma'aloh. Or one must say that there is some way that it is indeed a ma'aloh. I think that's what he wants to go with in this answer, I just don't know how he's going to say it. I think there must be some ma'aloh.

Speaker 2: I didn't hear the question.

Speaker 1: In Hilkhhot De'ot and also in Shemonah Perakim the Rambam says that one who is a me'uleh, one who doesn't seek sin at all, has no desire for sin, is better than one who restrains himself from sin. But here it looks different. It's a contradiction in the Rambam.

Answer — The Ba'al Teshuva Has Truly Changed

Speaker 1: The truth is it's not different. Let's understand clearly. Here he's not talking about the phenomenon when the person still has the wild yetzer hara. The truth is these are two different inquiries. It's a similar reasoning, the reasoning of the Penei Tzarot of the Gra is similar. But the reality he's talking about is different. Here he's talking about someone who yesterday was a ba'al de'ot ra'ot (person of bad character), now he doesn't have the bad character, not now is he kovesh et yitzro. He went back, the day after tomorrow also not. He changed internally. But the moshel benefsho that he talks about, no, no, not at all. "Hu shav min haka'as", now he goes back.

Speaker 2: He also wasn't only from the first three, he was also from the dibur hamatchil, as you said, he was a bad person.

Speaker 1: He became a good person.

Speaker 2: But the good person who became after he was a bad person has a ma'alah over the one who was from the beginning a good person.

Speaker 1: That is indeed a difference.

Speaker 2: I don't know how to think, I think that perhaps here somewhere one can understand that on this the detail with the Rambam wasn't said, because here the detail with the Rambam is with saying for example that a tov vera lo (good and bad to him) is better because the bad he has a bad ratzon (will).

Speaker 1: As you say, someone who wants to be a...

Parable with the Rapist — Difference Between Still Having a Bad Will and Having Stopped Wanting

Speaker 1: Let's say something that we all hold is bad, yes? Someone who has a terrible desire to be a rapist and he restrains himself, you don't say he's a great tzadik because he restrains himself. You don't say he gets credit for restraining himself from not doing it. But someone who doesn't want to be such a bad person, but you say, someone who stopped wanting, certainly he gets credit for that. Do you understand? It's not the same problem.

He has both ma'alot as if, he gets credit for stopping, and now he's a whole person. But why exactly there is a difference, one must still understand. But it's still another...

"Makom Sheba'alei Teshuva Omdin" — Madreigah, Not Place

Speaker 1: But our Rabbis, the Sages, this is what the Sages said, "**makom sheba'alei teshuva omdin bo, ein tzadikim gemurim yekholm la'amod bo**". What does "makom" mean? It means the ma'alah, the madreigah (level) where they are placed is higher, their ma'alah le'atid lavo (in the world to come) is greater than the ma'alah, than the level of those who never sinned. "**Lefi sheta'amu ta'am hakhet uferashu mimenu vekhivshu yitzram yoter mehem**". Because they tasted the taste of sin and they separated from it, and they subdued their yetzer hara more than them.

This is brought in Hilkhos Yesodei HaTorah chapter 2, 11, "makom", when it was said that the angels are "zulat lema'alah mizeh", he says, it doesn't mean in place, it means in madreigah. He says the same here, "umakom" is a metaphor for the madreigah, the ma'alah.

Halakha 5 — Teshuvat HaKelal and Geulah

Transition from Individual to Community

Speaker 1: So, now he's going to learn apparently, the next piece talks about teshuvat hakelal (communal repentance), right? Now until now it's been talking about one person who does teshuva. Now we're going to say that also the kelal (community), the state, yes, Kelal Yisrael, will also do teshuva at the end, and this is similar. I think that perhaps this is very similar to yesterday's discussion, where he said, the Rambam says that before Mashiakh comes one must do teshuva, and we do teshuva now because perhaps Mashiakh will come. What is one saying... This is the end of the world, like a person holds at the end, so naturally he should quickly do teshuva.

Prophets — Their Main Function

Speaker 1: He says further, "**kol hanevi'im kulam tzivvu al hateshuva**". All the prophets commanded people to do teshuva, and aroused them. Perhaps this is the point of all

prophecy? Just as he said earlier that "yorekh otom baderekh" means that He sends prophets. And in general, prophets besides Moshe can't have any mitzvot. What can it be? Only to arouse, only to do teshuva on what Moshe Rabbeinu already said about the mitzvot.

"Ein Yisrael Nig'alim Ela BiTeshuva" — Dispute of Tannaim

Speaker 1: He says further, "**ve'ein Yisrael nig'alim ela biteshuva**". Jews are only redeemed through teshuva. "Ukhvar hivtikha haTorah". What do these words mean? That the geulah (redemption) will only come in the merit of teshuva, or the geulah will come together with teshuva?

Speaker 2: There won't be any geulah without teshuva.

Speaker 1: There's a dispute in the Gemara, a dispute of Tannaim. There were those who said that it will perhaps be without teshuva. The Rambam rules that one must do teshuva.

Discussion: Contradiction with "Reshut Beyad Adam"

Speaker 1: But he says, "**ukhvar hivtikha haTorah shesof Yisrael la'asot teshuva besof galutan umiyad hen nig'alim**". This is difficult with the earlier question of "reshut beyad adam" (free will in man's hand).

Speaker 2: The answer is that this is like the Rambam said on "va'avadam ve'inu otam". It could be that the reshut beyad adam is only before the geulah, and once the geulah comes there will already perhaps be another teshuva.

Speaker 1: No, no, I would say simply, the answer must be like he said earlier, that this is the order, the order is that one can't remain in evil forever.

Speaker 2: Yes, but by the order he also said that not every individual is obligated.

Speaker 1: Here he says about Jews.

Speaker 2: No, no, "Yisrael" means "Kelal Yisrael", "Kelal Yisrael" is a kelal. It could be individuals.

Speaker 1: Each one who will do teshuva, that will be bireshuto uvivkhirato (by his permission and choice). No one will be forced to do teshuva.

Verse "Vehaya Ki Yavo'u Alekha" — Language of Choice

Speaker 1: "**Vehaya ki yavo'u alekha kol hadevarim ha'eleh haberakha vehakelalah asher natati lefanekha**". This means simply what I have given into your hand.

Speaker 2: Yes, like "habarakha vehakelalah" that stands by "re'eh anokhi noten lifneikhem hayom", when it lies in your hand.

Speaker 1: He perhaps wants to say that the whole thing will come, first there will be blessing, there will be curse, and afterwards, "**vahasheivota el levavekha**", this will bring you to do teshuva, "**bekhol hagoyim asher hiddikhakha Hashem Elokekha shama. Veshavta ad Hashem Elokekha**", which is doing teshuva until the Ribbono Shel Olam... that's how it goes until the Ribbono Shel Olam, right?

Speaker 2: Yes, I think the Rebbe is going to learn from this step that "Hashem Elokekha", that a person comes until the Ribbono Shel Olam, yes?

Speaker 1: Okay. Later he will say "**veshamata bekolo**", and he will say "bekol Hashem", "kol Hashem" is "nakhal nove'a mekor khokhma".

But the main thing, I think that the whole thing will come, first there will be blessing, there will be the whole thing, and

afterwards **"vahasheivota el levavekha"**, this will bring you to do teshuva, **"bekhol hagoyim asher hiddikhakha Hashem Elokekha shama"**.

"Veshavta ad Hashem Elokekha", you will do teshuva until the Ribbono Shel Olam, and... yes, I think the Rambam is going to learn from **"veshavta ad Hashem Elokekha"**, that the person comes until the Ribbono Shel Olam, yes.

Later he will bring **"veshamata bekolo kekhol asher anokhi metzavekha"**.

And afterwards, when you do teshuva, the Ribbono Shel Olam will accept your teshuva, **"veshav Hashem Elokekha et shevutekha"**, the Ribbono Shel Olam will bring you back to Eretz Yisrael, to... to the geulah, **"verikhamekha"** – He will love you again, **"veshav vekibetzekha mikol ha'amim asher hefitzekha Hashem Elokekha shama"**, He will gather you from among the nations where the Jews are.

So, the whole next group of halakhot is all strengthening on this.

Not exactly on teshuva, but more ma'alot that he emphasizes more the point that he said that all the days of a ba'al teshuva that he's simply a bedi'avad (after the fact).

No, teshuva brings a person back and he becomes... he talks all about the revolution, about the transformation that teshuva makes in people.

Yes, ah, so great is the power of teshuva.

"Gedolah teshuva shemekarevet et ha'adam laShekhina", it brings the person close to the Ribbono Shel Olam, **"shene'emar 'shuva Yisrael ad Hashem Elokekha"**, when a Jew does teshuva, he is **"ad Hashem Elokekha"**, he returns until the Ribbono Shel Olam.

"Vene'emar" – also stands a similar language – **"velo shavtem adai"**, you haven't done teshuva until Me.

It says that when one does teshuva one comes close back to the Ribbono Shel Olam.

Speaker 2: "Adai" or "adai"? How is the verse there?

Speaker 1: "Veshavtem adai", to Me, yes? That's what I think.

"Veshavtem adai", you will do teshuva until Me.

"Vene'emar" – another verse – **"im tashuv Yisrael ne'um Hashem, elai tashuv"**, if you will do teshuva, **"elai tashuv"**, that is to say, **"im takhazor biteshuva, bi tidbak"**, you will cleave to the Ribbono Shel Olam.

Teshuva Brings the Distant Close

Teshuva mekarevet et harekhokim. What does this mean? Yesterday, before the person did teshuva, **haya zeh sanu'i lifnei haMakom, sanu'i lifnei haMakom**, he was hated, he was in hatred, he was **meshukat, merukhak, meto'av**, these are all terms that one sees and says about people, yes, shikutzim, or one would say rakhok meto'av. **Hayom hu ahuv venehmad vekarov veyadid.**

It's interesting, because it's presumably that teshuva is only purifying toward the good path, but the change in how the Ribbono Shel Olam views it is very drastic, from one extreme to the other extreme. What does the Ribbono Shel Olam love a tzadik and what does He hate a rasha? It's very simple, no? I say, the person has simply moved a little bit, He looks at him doing a little better, but that's it. And actually this is the wonder of teshuva, that he truly becomes a better person, he has the love to do good things etc.

Bikhen anu motzim shebelashon shehaKadosh Barukh Hu merakhek et hakhotim, bo hu mekarev et hashavim, bein yakhid bein rabim. Shene'emar, vehaya bamakom asher ye'amer lahem o ye'amer lahem lo ami atem, the same place where they were called **lo ami**, they will begin to be called **benei El khai**. One sees that this goes in this form, the same thing that was by the sin is reversed by the teshuva.

Example of Yehoyakhin

Yes. **Vene'emar biYehoyakhin bereshito**, it says by Yehoyakhin in his beginning, when he was bad, what does it say? **Kitvu et ha'ish hazeh ariri gever lo yatzlakh beyamav**, what was the punishment on Yehoyakhin? That he will be childless, he won't have any children. And afterwards when he did teshuva it says, and afterwards when he did teshuva it says further, that the Ribbono Shel Olam even wanted to be nekhusam keshem shehatakantam, even though He said He would uproot them, **"ki atem mevakhshim nafsheikhem"**. But bikibbutzagaluyot, but once he did teshuva when he was in exile, **ne'emar biZerubavel beno**, who was his grandson, **"bayom hahu ne'um Hashem tzeva'ot ekakhekha Zerubavel ben She'altiel avdi ne'um Hashem vesamtikha kakhotam"**. It was said **"im yihyeh Khonyahu ben Yehoyakim melekh Yehuda khotam al yad yemini, ki misham etkanekha"**, I won't let you. He says, no, I will indeed make you a signet ring. One sees the same language that was used when the negative was said, now the positive is said. What was said he isn't, now he becomes yes. She'altiel was a son of Yekhanya.

How Excellent is the Level of Teshuva

The Rambam says further, **"kama me'ulah ma'alat hateshuva"**, so great is the ma'alah of teshuva. **"Emesh haya zeh sanu lifnei haMakom meshukat umerukhak veto'eva. Vehayom hu ahuv venehmad karov veyadid"**. Yesterday the person was separated and was far from Hashem Elokei Yisrael, **shene'emar "avonotekhem hayu mavdilim beinekhem levein Elokeikhem"**. And what happens when one is separated from Hashem Elokei Yisrael? **"Tzo'ek ve'eino ne'eneh"**, he is not helped, **shene'emar "gam ki tarbu tefila eineni shome'a"**. A cry is only good when it's with teshuva. **"Ve'oseh mitzvot vetorefin otan befanav"**, he does mitzvot and they throw them in his face, they don't accept it, they don't receive it, **shene'emar "mi bikesh zot mideikhem remos khatzarai"**. Who asked you to trample on the courtyard of the Beit HaMikdash? **"Mi gam bakhem veyisgor delatayim velo ta'iru mizbakh khinam, ein li khafetz bakhem amar Hashem tzeva'ot uminkhah lo ertzeh mideikhem"**. When Jews sin, the Ribbono Shel Olam says, I don't accept your sacrifices, I don't accept your offerings, that you bring on the altar. **"Oloteikhem sefu al zivkheikhem ve'ikhlu vasar"**. This is the haftarah of Parashat Tzav that is almost never said, because it's Shabbat HaGadol. **"Oloteikhem sefu al zivkheikhem ve'ikhlu vasar"**. He says, take your olot, stick them in with your zevakhim and eat them. Take your prayer and go home, I don't need your olot.

But **"vehayom hu medubak baShekhina"**, one does teshuva, he is cleaving to the Ribbono Shel Olam, **shene'emar "ve'atem hadvekim baHashem Elokeikhem"**. And crying is one against the sins. He shouts, when one wants to be answered, **shene'emar "az tikra"**

vaHashem ya'aneh". Even before there is an answer. Immediately when he calls he is answered.

What is the mitzva to receive pleasantly and joyfully? Must one receive it? Does the Ribbono Shel Olam become... or yes? Must one receive it pleasantly and joyfully, **shene'emar "kafa rotze aleihem mashma'otekha lo yodi'a al shemot avotekhem"**. One desires them, the verses, the prophets, the word of Hashem desires them already, **shene'emar "ve'arva laHashem minkhat Yehuda viYerushalayim kimei olam"**, as it was once before we sinned. When we sinned it was **"mi bikesh zot mideikhem"**. But once we did teshuva it's sweet again for the Ribbono Shel Olam.

Digression: Haftarat Shabbat HaGadol

This is actually the haftarah of Shabbat HaGadol, which is the opposite of the haftarah of Parashat Tzav. I think there's a matter of some history. Truly the haftarah of "ve'arva" is only said when there's Pesakh on Shabbat, but in any case it was switched, it's said almost always. One of the reasons is because one doesn't want to say the haftarah of Parashat Tzav, because Parashat Tzav is a sharp haftarah against the sacrifices that are read in the Torah. One says, it contradicts the opposite. And especially Shabbat HaGadol one says "ve'arva laHashem minkhat Yehuda", that is, what He said earlier "I don't want your sacrifices", I do want it, everything yes when there is teshuva.

Speaker 2: What makes it gadol or what?

Speaker 1: Ah, it comes out "yom Hashem hagadol". Ah, "yom Hashem hagadol", that means the haftarah. That's how it begins, one begins... The "yom Hashem hagadol" is very good, because it says "ein Yisrael nig'alim ela biteshuva". We're talking here about teshuva. So naturally "ve'arva laHashem", and naturally there is a "yom hagadol" of teshuva. Ah, good. Okay.

Halakha 5 (Continued) – Ba'alei Teshuva Their Way is to be Humble and Modest

Now one can learn a new interesting thing. Okay, let's say it this way. The entire piece of Rambam that we were saying, that after one does teshuva (repentance) the Jew is like a tzaddik gamur (complete righteous person), it comes out that one can learn... because he is now a tzaddik gamur, and he has changed in a moment, in the blink of an eye. Or on the other hand, one will learn two interesting things, two opposite things. On one hand, the baal teshuva (penitent) himself doesn't carry around a big baggage. On the other hand, another person must give him a big baggage. There is a derech ha'emtza'i (middle path). Let's explain the Rambam. **Baalei teshuva darkam l'hiyot shfalim va'anavim b'yoter** (penitents, their way is to be extremely humble and modest), to be an anav (humble person). It could have actually been that they are at the level of baalei teshuva, at the level of tzaddikim gemurim (complete righteous people), but they must conduct themselves differently. **Im cherfu otam ha'tipshim b'ma'aseihem ha'rishonim** (if fools disgrace them for their earlier deeds), there is still a prohibition to... The Rambam calculated earlier that it is a great prohibition. Ah. The Rambam says, but if there is a fool who shames the other one for his earlier deeds. Obviously he is a fool, because you are now a baal teshuva and you say to him, you were once a drunkard, you are now a drunkard about the drunkard. The one who holds himself for a time and says to the former

drunkard, you were once a drunkard, so that he himself should be a drunkard. And that one is a fool. **Omer lahem, emesh hayita oseh kach v'kach** (says to them, yesterday you did such and such), what you did yesterday, because **emesh hayita omer kach v'kach** (yesterday you said such and such), because in the Rambam **al yargishu lahem** (they should not feel it), the baal teshuva, when others do this there, the baal teshuva should not become upset from what they're doing to him. It wouldn't be the story. So we have a similar language that we saw by the... Nu, where did we see this language? By the topic of... in Hilchos Deos. Yes, one feels, like Moshe one feels, the one who feels is different. Yes, **ela, shom'im** (rather, they hear), he hears what the other one says **with humility, with lowliness and they rejoice**, and they rejoice. What is the joy? I don't know. What do they rejoice. What do they rejoice, when they have done teshuva perhaps.

Speaker 2: So, you mean that what one suffers from saying yesterday, on the contrary. He remembers how he was, and what a long way he's come, how holy he is today.

Speaker 1: Ah, correct. **V'yod'im** (and they know), fits very well, the yesterday. Earlier it says yesterday, listen yes, and today! The other one says yesterday, think about the today! Today he is a complete servant of the Almighty. **Az deos she'es zoeh zechus lahem** (so opinions that see merit in them). So opinions that see, it's understood. Everyone reads them a merit. **That they are embarrassed by the bad deeds that passed, and are ashamed of them, is a great merit and their virtue increases.** Yes. Further... the shame that he has is itself something that atones for sins and so on. But if you think that you should help the baal teshuva, that you should constantly remind him, you give a great help. No, not.

The Prohibition of Onaas Devarim to a Baal Teshuva

What a great sin it is to say to a baal teshuva, remember your past sins. **O l'hazkiran b'fanav** (or to remind them in his presence), or to remind, even not to say so crudely "remember now what you did," but to remind of the sins in his presence **kedei l'vaysho. O l'hazkir devarim v'inyanim ha'domim lahem** (in order to shame him. Or to mention things and matters similar to them), even just to hint, to hint at his previous sins, **hakol asur** (everything is forbidden), this thing is forbidden **min haTorah, bichlal onaas devarim she'zehira alav Torah** (from the Torah, in the category of verbal wrongdoing that the Torah warned about), this is within the category of onaas devarim that the Torah has warned.

And we learned earlier, there is a prohibition of onaas devarim, hurting a Jew with words, as it says **"v'lo tonu ish es amito"** (and you shall not wrong one another).

Very good. So this is very beautiful. This is truly a proof that here the chapter is explained. So the entire chapter he speaks of this, that the baal teshuva becomes different. On the other hand, he doesn't have to think, he must keep himself humble, and it actually helps him to be... But every single person will know that one may not say to him even "do you remember your earlier deeds."

The Chiddush of Reb Tzadok — The Baal Teshuva is Actually a New Person

I think that here, as I think Reb Tzadok says, it's not just a thing that he's bothering him, because it's actually not true, he

actually is not that person. The Rambam said "**ani acher v'eini oto ha'ish**" (I am another and I am not that man). But the fool, the kesil (fool), doesn't grasp it, he doesn't know that teshuva means that he becomes a new person, so consequently he reminds him. One should not do this. Tremendous!