

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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Kabbalah and Meditation - Week 3 – 2021

1. Since prayer is an expression of *teshuvah ilaah*, the higher level of return, it must be preceded by *teshuvah tataah*, the lower level of return that is reached by the contriteness of a penitent heart.
This is what the Sages intended in the Mishnah (Talmud, Berachot 30b): “One should embark on worship only in an earnest frame of mind.” *Rashi* explains this to mean “humility”. This is the state of *teshuvah tataah*...
2. At the same time, we must note the *Baraita* there: “Our Sages taught, ‘One should embark on worship only with joy.’” (Talmud *ibid*, 31a)
3. Thus, while the individual is to begin his preparations for prayer by achieving a state of bitterness of spirit, he is expected to begin his actual prayers in a state of joy.
4. In our bereaved generation, however, when not all are capable of turning their hearts instantly from one extreme [to the other], from humility to joy, it is advised that *teshuvah tataah* be practiced earlier, at *Tikkun Chatzot*; this is an especially appropriate time for the spiritual stocktaking that leads to the humility of a “broken and contrite heart”.
5. Whoever cannot do this nightly should maintain an absolute minimum of once every week, before the SHABBAT. It is familiar to the initiates in the mysteries of the Torah that SHABBAT is of the order of *teshuvah ilaah*; indeed, the very letters of the word SHABBAT שבת spell *tashev* תשב (“You return”), as in the phrase, “You cause man to return.” (Psalms 90:3). For on Shabbat, all the worlds ascend to their Source..., and this, too, is the time of the ascent of the soul to its Source—which constitutes the act of *teshuvah*.
6. (We can now understand the phrase, “Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.” (Isaiah 44:22) For since [as in the preceding phrase] “I have erased your sins like a thick cloud,” removing the *sitra achara*, and “I have redeemed you” from the evil (lit., “extraneous”) forces through the arousal of supreme compassion following the initiative taken by man below in his *teshuvah tataah*, as explained above, therefore, “Return to Me”—with *teshuvah ilaah*.”) (Igeret Hateshuva 10)
7. This subject, simultaneously harboring contrite humility in the heart—the state of *teshuvah tataah*, as explained—and the abovementioned [contrary emotion of] joy in G-d that is also necessary for the service of prayer, has already been discussed in *Likkutei Amarim*, chapters 31 and 34.
8. This is as stated in the *Zohar* (III 75a): “[Weeping is lodged in one side of my heart, and] joy is lodged in the other side of my heart.” [This statement was made by R. Elazar ben R. Shimon. Hearing from his father Kabbalistic insights into the Destruction of the Holy Temple, he was at one and the same time heartbroken from his renewed recognition of the enormity of the Destruction—and joyful to be inducted into the mysteries of the Torah. We thus see from the *Zohar* that two opposite emotions can coexist when they result from two different causes.]
9. Joined to this is faith and confidence, the heart being firm and certain in G-d—that “He delights in kindness,” (Micah 7:18) and is “gracious and merciful” (Psalms 145:8) and abundantly forgiving the instant one entreates Him for forgiveness and atonement. (*Ibid*, 11)
10. Just as there is a restoration of the *hey* Above, exactly so below in the Divine soul within man; no more do “your sins separate [you from G-d].” (Isaiah 59:2) ...“He cleanses those who return to Him in penitence,” (Talmud, Yoma 86a) to lave and cleanse their souls of the soiled garments, which are the evil (lit., “extraneous”) forces... [And] after the “wind [of forgiveness] passes over [the souls of sinners] and purifies them,” (Job 37:21) then their souls are enabled to return literally unto G-d Himself, to ascend the greatest heights, to their very Source, and cleave to Him with a remarkable unity, in ultimate union with Him...
11. This is perfect return—*teshuvah*. This state of unity and this return are called *teshuvah ilaah*, the higher level of repentance, that follows *teshuvah tataah*, the lower level of repentance. (*Ibid*, 8)
12. ...for concerning the realm of holiness, it is written: “Strength and gladness are in His place,” (Chronicles I, 16:27) and likewise, “The Divine Presence abides...only in [man’s] joy...and the same joy is required for the study of the Halachah.” (Talmud, Shabbat 30b)
...(For this reason, the Arizal writes that even worry over one’s sins is appropriate only during confession,

but not during prayer and Torah study. These must be conducted with a joy deriving exclusively from the realm of holiness, as opposed to frivolity and the like.)

13. ...He will then arrive at a true joy, as follows: In order to comfort his heart in double measure, let him—in the wake of the above words of truth concerning his lowly spiritual stature—tell himself the following.
14. ...Let him say to his heart: “Indeed, without a doubt, I am far removed, utterly remote from G-d, and am despicable, contemptible, and so on. But all this is true only of me—that is, my body and the animating soul within it. Yet within me, there is a veritable ‘part’ of G-d, which is present even in the most worthless of my fellows, so that even if I am no better than he, I still have this ‘part’ of G-d within me, namely, the divine soul and the spark of G-dliness itself clothed in it, animating it.
It is only that when the body and animating soul are in such a lowly state, the divine soul is in exile within them. If so, then, on the contrary, the further I am removed from G-d, and the more despicable and contemptible, the deeper in exile is my divine soul, and all the more is it to be pitied. Therefore, I will make it my entire aim and desire to extricate it from this exile and to ‘return her to her father’s house i.e., to restore it to its source and its original state ‘as in her youth,’ i.e., as it was before being clothed in my body, when it was completely absorbed in G-d’s light and united with Him.
Now, too, will it likewise be absorbed and united with Him once again, when I concentrate all my aspirations on the Torah and the *mitzvot*, in an effort to clothe therein all [of the soul’s] ten faculties; i.e., by applying my mental faculties to Torah study and my emotive faculties to the performance of the *mitzvot* with the vitality lent them by the love and fear of G-d... Thus, will my divine soul be reunited with G-d.
15. Especially in fulfilling the mitzvah of prayer will I try to release my divine soul by crying out to G-d because of the distress of its exile in my loathsome body so that He release it from captivity and bind it to Himself.
16. This service of G-d, in which one seeks to restore the soul to its source, is referred to as “*teshuvah* with good deeds.” (Ethics of our Fathers 4:17) This denotes the “good deeds” which one does with the intention of returning the soul, which is part of G-d, to the [Divine] source and root of all the worlds.
17. This, then, should be one’s lifelong aim in the service of G-d with great joy—the joy of the soul upon leaving the loathsome body and returning, during one’s study of the Torah and service of G-d through prayer, to “her father’s house as in her youth,” i.e., to the unity with G-d that it enjoyed before it descended into the body.
18. This corresponds to the statement of our Sages (Talmud, Shabbat 153a) that one ought to engage in *Teshuva* throughout his life.
19. Surely, there is no joy as great as that of being released from exile and captivity. It is comparable to the joy of a prince who was taken captive and was subjected to the hard labor of turning the millstone in prison while covered with filth, and who then goes free to the house of his father, the king.
20. True, ...the essential character of the animal soul has not been transformed to good so that it might be absorbed into the realm of holiness. Yet, let his divine soul be more precious to him than his loathsome body so that he rejoices in the soul’s joy at its liberation, through the observance of the Torah and the *mitzvot*, from the exile of the body, without letting the sadness on account of the lowly state of his body interfere with or disturb the joy of the soul. (Tanya, Chapter 31)

Repent / Return			תשובה
Return	Hei (The 4 th letter of G-ds Name)	ה	תשוב
Shabbat			שבת

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