

Not happy about Elul

Posted by obormottel - 02 Sep 2011 07:32

I heard a chassidishe vort on a midrash that says :it's better to walk behind a lion than behind a girl (besula). Why?

Because if a lion turns around i'll be scared, do tshuvo and Hashem will save me, ma she ein ken b'bsulo - I will only get excited and run towards her.

So the vort is, it's better to do tshuvo in the month of Av (mazel Arye) then in Elul (mazel Bsulo).

If anyone one knows the particulars of this vort, please let me know, 'cause I forgot. But my take on what I remember is this:

This year, I am not excited about the month of Elul. It's not because the tshuvo winds are blowing (borrowed expression) and they are knocking me off my feet. It's not because the King is in the field and He is powerfully pulling me towards him, compelling me to visit in the House of the L-rd and take pleasure in the noyam Eloiki.

What choice do I have this month not to do tshuvo? It's like following a girl, all she has to do is turn around and wink, and I'll be right there, dripping saliva and breathing heavily.

The reason I'm not happy about Elul, is because I am not ready for tshuvo, and I think that tshuvo will interfere with a very important avoido I strated doing recently (as it happens, in Av).

The avoido is STOPPING THE SINNING. True, azivas hacheit IS part of tshuvo. But that only means that azivas hacheit isn't the point of what I'm saying.

Azivas hacheit means to forever stop doing what you're doing.

It is an impossible undertaking for me. I can only be meazeiv hacheit for one day. Sometimes, for only a part of day.

So I am barely working on just stopping the impulsive sinning at a sight of whateva. I am not doing tshuvo, I am not even abandoning sin. I am just abstaining from sin for this moment only.

So I am not happy that Elul is here. It's too soon, and I may get carried away and start doing tshuvo. And I think that would be counter-productive to what I really should be doing (or not doing, as it happens): not sinning.

I just have to not sin. I don't know of anything else. As they say in mame loшон: Ich weiss fun gornisht.

I don't know fun tshuvo, I don't know fun charoto, I don't know from azivas hacheit, and certainly not fun kabolo al l'habo. I am just trying not to be mz'l. Not to be soser acharei ayneichem. Not to be meharher bayom. Not to be makshe l'daas. Not to have my ta'avas noshim be my balabos. A tiny step at a time. A baby step.

This has nothing to do with tshuvo. I guess this Elul and Tishrei I will not be mis'chareit. And I will not do tshuvo. Please G-d, I should accomplish one thing: not sin.

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by JackAbbey - 02 Sep 2011 08:00

wow mottel! seems like we are mind tuned, i had exactly the same thoughts last year elul

until i stumbled across a cd from hrav moshkowits rav of shotz about tsuvah

he claims with mareh mekomos, that tshuveh ?? ????? ????? ????? ??????? ?? ???? ????? ????
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does NOT mean that he will NEVER repeat that sin

it means that as for today i stopped sinning, and TODAY if that nisoyon comes across, i wont repeat it, & if i will allways be on TODAY'S matzav, then i will never sin again, however, if i fall tommorow from my position, & ch"v repeat that old sin, its not considered a continuation, its merely considered a new sin

that makes tsuveh a hell of a lot easier, and more realistic

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by cordnoy - 08 Sep 2014 04:01

that is why the rambam uses the term "yodea taalumos" - the One Who knows the hidden stuff, for it is in our heart; he did not use the term, "yodea ha-asidus" - He knows the future, for to fulfill charatah, he has to be on that level now.

That bein' said, r' obbermottel, I have been sayin' that teshuvah we will do sometime in the future; now our focus is doin' the right thing for this moment.

Sh'koyach!

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by unanumun - 08 Sep 2014 19:57

There is a line from Rav Wolbe Zatzal where he says that the din is on where we are holding at the exact time of tekias shofar. it is part of baasher hoo sham. not before and not after.

Also, there is a piece of Rabbeinu Yonah where he is mechalek between two kinds of chet.

Some the azivas hachet has to go before the charata and some the charat before the azivas hachet.

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by ur-a-jew - 09 Sep 2014 00:33

As I was reading your post, I was thinking about what I heard this past week. If true Teshuva was that I would never sin again then the Rambam would say "ad shya'id alov yodea ha-asidus." The Rambam doesn't say that because that is not what Teshuva is about. Instead, azivas hacheit is getting us back to where we were before the cheit. Which is in a position to choose between good and bad. When we sinned however we upset that balance. As the mishna says aveirah goreres aveirah and schar aveirah aveirah. When we sin we are no longer presented with a 50/50 choice of choosing good and bad. Instead, bad is a far easier choice. True teshuva is to get us back to 50/50. It may be we may sin again, but it was from a 50/50 choice.

It seems to me that you are on working on that goal. I was very glad to see that both Jack and Cordnoy had the same thought in mind.

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by gibbor120 - 10 Sep 2014 00:25

I can't remember where I saw this, but I think in something the chofetz chaim wrote (perhaps

mishna brura). Part of teshuva is putting up fences so we don't get to that point again. I suppose you can call it what you want, but in my book what you are doing IS teshuva.

I don't think teshuva fits into those neat little coloring pages that the kids bring home, a simple 3 (or 4) step program, azivas hachet, charata, viduy, kabalah al haasid. It's more complicated...

. No really, teshuva is not an event, it's an ongoing process.

People practicing the 12 steps don't graduate. They keep going through them as a lifelong process of growth.

I think sometimes, that is part of our problem. We want to DO TESHUVAH and poof, we're done, we did it. Me thinks it don't work like that. More like the mashal of scrubbing a stain. The more we work at it, the lighter the stain becomes.
like a 12 step program

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by SIB101854 - 15 Sep 2014 03:21

For those interested in a fantastic insight from a Rishon on where your Taavahs Nashim can lead, look at the Ramban on Devarim 29:18.

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by gibbor120 - 15 Sep 2014 20:51

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Re: Not happy about Elul

Posted by Cheshbon Tzedek - 15 Sep 2014 21:32

Reb Mottel,

I can totally relate to what you are going through. I've been there and done that. When you do Teshuvah during Elul/Tishrei only to fall again once it's all over.

But it's not fake. It's the true inner you!

Elul is Ani Ledodi Vedodi Li and Tishrei is Tav, Shin, Reish, Yud. Both symbolize a time when we make the first move to which Hashem responds. The fact that the king is in the field only means that Hashem is more present and waiting for us to make that first move. But when we do, it's our own move.

It also gives us a break for a month or two. This break is very important because it's much easier to hold yourself back when you've been clean for two months.

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