



## Core Confession

*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah* and Yom Kippur are the special times during the year designated for introspection and reflection. Often, when these days come around, we feel a frustration as we compare our current state to years before and think that we haven't made much progress or effected much improvement since the previous year. Upon reflection, we may notice that each year we attempt to do teshuvah for the same sins and often wonder why we haven't met with more success. What are

we missing?

Rabbi Kluger in *My Sole Desire* notes that teshuvah is not simply about correcting a behavior or attitude, that is only an outer manifestation of the problem. True teshuvah is getting to the root of the issue. We can compare this to one who takes medication addressing the symptom of pain his body feels, heedless of the primary cause of the pain. In a *derashah* on the topic of teshuvah, the *Meiri* explains that one must examine his inner thoughts and explore the middot that lead him to sin. Yeshayahu Hanavi teaches, “*yazov rasha darko, ve'ish aven machshevotav* - The wicked shall give up his way, and the man of iniquity his thoughts.” (*Yeshayahu* 55:7) Indeed, most of our sins are symptoms of an underlying jealousy, desire, honor, emptiness or feeling unworthy.

Rav Eisenberger in *Mesilot Bilvavam* expounds that the Torah injunction to uproot *avodah zarah* provides a model for approaching teshuvah as well. When one analyzes the prevalent sins in his life, he will find repeating patterns of behavior and habit loops and thus, introspection enables a person to identify the triggers responsible for his actions and reactions. For example, one may notice that he constantly puts down the efforts of others and is critical of their decisions and choices. Upon further reflection he may discover a fragile self-esteem, and this is his way of boosting his feeling of value and importance. Instead of self-criticism and

In Loving Memory of

**Tsvi Hersh ben Menachem Mendel z"l (Harold Klaff)**

on his 37<sup>th</sup> yearzeit - 4 Tishrei

and

**Chana bat Tsvi Hersh a"n (Lolly Dan)**

on her 21st yearzeit - 5 Tishrei

and

**Avraham Yisroel ben Shlomo**

**Zalman z"l (Avrome Dan)**

on his 38th yearzeit - 1<sup>st</sup> day of Succot

May their wonderful Neshamot  
have Aliyot

*Debbie & Herby Dan*

putting oneself down, we can find ways to address our limitations with humor and honesty, channeling our strengths with positivity and purpose.

Uprooting the ‘*zarah*,’ the parts of us that are foreign and disconnected from our authentic core will generate a domino-like effect on all our behaviors and attitudes, effecting teshuvah that is real and lasting.

This idea is reflected in the *haftarah* that we read on *Shabbat Shuvah*. “*Shuvah Yisrael ad Hashem Elokecha ki kashalta be’avonecha* - Return, O Israel, to Hashem, for you have stumbled in your iniquity.” (*Hoshea 14:2*) Rashi, always sensitive to the nuances of the text, addresses an obvious question. An ‘*avon*’ is a sin one does deliberately, stumbling implies falling over something that he didn’t notice. How can these two exist simultaneously? Rashi answers, “Obstacles have come to you **because of your iniquity.**”

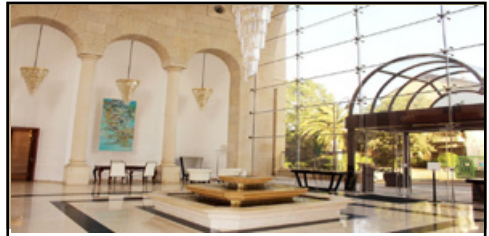
A person starts with a conscious sin which unwittingly spirals into many more sins. The key is in finding and addressing the fundamental challenge which will result in a broad change.

These ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the time to discover the root of our obstacles and pinpoint the barriers to growth. A small *kabbalah* taken on toward that end will lead us to connect with our most authentic selves, the pure Divine Will deep within every one of us. ■

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repairs

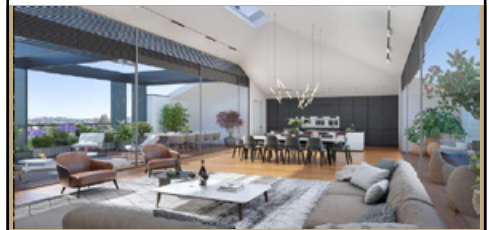
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