

TEXT STUDY

Yom Kippur

Question to Ponder

According to these laws, what is *teshuvah* (repentance)? How is it similar/different from apologizing? Can you think of examples from popular culture when a person apologized for a misdeed, but did not actually do *teshuvah*? Are there times when you yourself have apologized but not truly done *teshuvah*?



Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:1 *(from Maimonides' code of Jewish law, written in Egypt circa 1170-80)*

What is complete repentance? When a person has the opportunity to commit the same sin, and he possesses the ability to do it, but he separates and does not do it because of a desire to repent and not out of fear or lack of strength... And if a person only repents in the days of old age, when it is not possible to do what he once did, even though this is not the highest form of repentance, it is effective. Even if a person sinned all his days and repented on the day of his death, all his sins are forgiven.

Question to Ponder

Maimonides gives a number of examples for ways that a person can demonstrate that his/her/their *teshuvah* is sincere. What are things that help you know that a person's apology is genuine? Are there better ways that you can demonstrate your desire for *teshuvah* to those you've hurt in the year ahead?



Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:4 *(from Maimonides' code of Jewish law, written 1170-80 CE)*

Among the ways of demonstrating repentance are for the penitent to constantly shout before God with crying and pleading; to perform acts of charity according to his ability; to distance himself very far from the thing in which he sinned; to change his name, meaning to say "I am someone else and I am not the same person who did those things;" to change all of his actions for good and onto the straight path; and/or to go into exile, because exile atones for sins since it forces him to bow and to be humble and of low spirit.

Mishnah, Yoma 8.9 *(from Jewish oral law, redacted/codified by R'Yehudah haNasi in late 3rd C CE)*

One who says, "I will sin, and then repent, I will sin [again], and then repent," will not receive an opportunity to repent; [for one who says] "I will sin, and Yom Kippur will atone," Yom Kippur will not atone. Yom Kippur atones for transgressions between a person and God, but for a transgression against one's neighbor, Yom Kippur cannot atone, until he appeases his neighbor.