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FROM THE MOMENT OF THE INCEPTION OF SICHOS YISROEL, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OBVIOUS QUESTION; WHERE WILL THE MONEY COME FROM? NEITHER MYSELF OR MY PARTNER IN THIS ENDEVOUR WERE IN THE POSITION TO FUND THIS PROJECT. WHILE THE INITIAL PRINTING WAS ON A SMALL SCALE, WE VERY QUICKLY REALIZED THE DEMAND FOR THIS PUBLICATION WAS MUCH BROADER AND WE'D NEED TO RAISE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MONEY TO PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE. WE HAD SEEN THE RISE OF OTHER TORAH PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS TORAS AVIGDOR AND HAD AN IDEA OF THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO REACH NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION ON A WEEKLY BASIS. HOWEVER, THANKFULLY WE HAD A REBBE WHO HAD TAUGHT US THAT WE REALLY DID HAVE A SOURCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT, A VERY RICH FATHER THAT WAS GLAD TO SUPPORT THIS WONDERFUL ENDEVOUR. OF COURSE, THIS WAS THE BOREI OLAM! WE DID OUR BEST TO FOCUS ON THE CONTENT AND LAYING THE GROUND WORK FOR DISTRIBUTION AND SAW THE YAD HASHEM ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. PEOPLE THAT WE HAD NO IDEA WERE CAPABLE OF SUCH LEVELS OF SUPPORT REACHED OUT TO SPONSOR OUR ENTIRE START UP COST AND BEYOND! THIS HAS CONTINUED EVERY TIME WE'RE IN NEED OF FUNDS TO CONTINUE THIS PUBLICATION AND ITS GROWTH. TILL THIS DAY, 100% OF THE FUNDS RAISED FOR SICHOS YISROEL GO DIRECTLY TO THE EDITING, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF THIS PUBLICATION. WE ARE VERY THANKFUL TO THE VERY GENEROUS PARTNERS WHO SUPPORT SICHOS YISROEL AND ASSIST IN ITS PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION AND WE DAVEN THAT WE SHOULD HAVE THE ZECHUS TO CONTINUE ITS GROWTH AND INSPIRE MORE AND MORE YIDDEN!

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RABBI YOCHANAN BEN ZAKAI - YOSEF'S GILGUL

The Ramchal writes, in *Derech Hashem*, about the concept of *gilgulei neshamos*, how a person could come back in different forms.¹ As a matter of fact, one person can even have a number of *neshamos*. There are many people who don't understand what motivates them and where they get their *koach* from. The *gemara* (Bava Metzia 84a) tells us, for example, that Rabbi Yochanan said: אנא מזרעא דיוסף קאתינא "I come from the offspring of Yosef." Rav Chaim Vital explains that Rabbi Yochanan was a *gilgul* of Yosef Hatzaddik. Rabbi Yochanan had a terrible experience in his life where he had ten sons, illustrious sons, all of whom died (Brachos 5b). I'm sure many of us would have thought Rabbi Yochanan had a very bad *ayin hara*. Rabbi Yochanan was one of the most beautiful human beings around. Rabbi Yochanan had ten amazing children. If a guy would lose ten kids, what would everybody say? *Ayin hara*. But since Rabbi Yochanan said אנא מזרעא דיוסף קאתינא, the *gemara* says, he wasn't afraid of *ayin hara*. The *gemara* says that Rabbi Yochanan used to sit outside the ladies' *mikvaos* so that when they would come out, they would see him, they would look at his face, and then they would give birth to beautiful, special children.

They asked him: "Are you concerned about *ayin hara*?" He said, "No." Everybody would have thought all his *tzaros* in his life are because of *ayin hara*. That's what everybody says today. It had nothing to do with *ayin hara*. He told them, "I'm from Yosef. I don't have any *ayin hara*."

This is part of the *gilgul haneshamos*. Rabbi Yochanan said he was from Yosef. He now became the father of ten sons who were all *gilgulim* of the ten sons of Yaakov. He understood clearly that these *neshamos* were born to him so that they should experience a *tikun*. Rabbi Yochanan was supposed to bring them to their *tikun*. And he did. And each one of them died when they fulfilled their *tikun*. They didn't die young. There are many people who have children who die young. A neighbor ran them over. They fell into something. They tripped on something. Crib death. They choked. Whatever the story is. You have to know a lot of these things are just *gilgulei neshamos*. These souls were given to a person to raise them and bring them to a *tikun*. So a person has to feel lucky that they brought this child, this *neshamah* to a *tikun*, and not feel bad for the loss.

BEAR STORY IN THE CATSKILLS

Now, I always tell a story that took place a number of years ago in the Catskill Mountains. There was a woman who put her baby on the porch outside the back of her house. The next thing she sees is a black bear on her porch that had come straight

¹ מקרים לאדם מצד גלגול נשמות: עוד שורש אחר נמצא להנהגה בעיני הע"ז והוא שהחכמה העליונה סידרה להרבות עוד ההצלה כמ"ש שנשמה אחר' תבא לעה"ז פעמים שונות בגופים שונים וע"ז הנה תוכל לתקן בפעם א' את אשר קלקלה בפעם אחרת או להשלים מה שלא השלימה ואולם בסוף כל הגלגולים לדין שלע"ל הנה הדין יהיה עליה כפי כל מה שעבר עליה מן הגלגולים שנתגלגלה ומן המצבים שהיתה בהם והנה אפשר שיגיעו עינים לאדם שנשמתו מגולגלת כפי מה שיוגרים לה מצד מה שעשתה בגלגול קודם וינתן לאדם ההוא בעולם מצב כפי זה וכפי המצב שיתן לו יהיה המשא אשר יוטל עליו וממש"ל וכבר דינו ית"ש מדוקדק על כל אדם לפי מה שהוא בכל בחינותיו. פ"י בכל פרטי מצבו באופן שלא יעמס לעולם על אדם לעה"ב שהוא הטוב האמיתי אשמה שאין לו באמת אבל יגיע לו מן המשא והפקוד בעה"ז כפי מה שתפלה לו החכמה העליונה וכפי זה יידונו מעשיו והנה פרטי בחינות רבות ימצאו בענין זה של הגלגול איך יהיה האדם נידון לפי מה שהוא בגלגול ולפי מה שקדם בגלגול אחר לשיהיה הכל ע"פ המשפט האמיתי והישר ועל כל זה נאמר הצור תמים פעלו כי כל דרכיו משפט וכי ואין בברואים ידיעה שתוכל לכלול מחשבות ית"ש ועומק עצות רק הכלל הזה ידעו ככל שאר הכללים שאי' ממקורות מקריהם של בני האדם בעה"ז הוא הגלגול ע"פ אותם החוקים והמשפטים הישוקו לפניו ית' להשלמה זה הענין כלו (דרך ה', חלק שני, בהשגחה האישיית)

out of the woods. She didn't see the bear coming, but it climbed on the porch, took the child's head in its mouth and sauntered away. That, the lady saw. I can only imagine the nightmares and how bad she felt. Did she do anything wrong? Not in the least bit. Putting your child on the back porch is not a problem. It's a gated porch. But it wasn't designed for bear protection.

Now, there's no *safek* in my mind that this child had a *neshamah* that came back to earth and needed to go through a *tikun* and that was its *tikun*. As horrifying as it is to all of us and to that mother, but if a person understands the *darkei Hashem*, then they're capable of accepting things like this.

THE GILGULIM OF RAV CHAIM VITAL

Rav Chaim Vital (1543-1620) was the star pupil of the Arizal (1534-1572). The Arizal moved to Tzfas from the land of Mitzrayim. In Mitzrayim, Hashem started to reveal His secrets to the Arizal, and over there he was told that he should move to Tzfas because in Tzfas there is a person named Chaim Vital. By moving to Tzfas the Arizal would be able to teach Torah to Rav Chaim Vital. The Arizal was told that the only reason he was to be in Tzfas was to teach Rav Chaim Vital. And not only that, the main reason why the Arizal came back to the world during that lifetime - this is 1571, more than four hundred years ago - was for the purpose of bringing Rav Chaim Vital to his perfection and to his *hashlamah*. The Arizal didn't come for himself. He had no need to come back on his own.

You see from here that sometimes a *neshamah* can be sent back to this earth just to complete someone else.

It wasn't incumbent upon the Arizal to teach any person other than Rav Chaim Vital Torah. And if not for the fact that he was teaching Rav Chaim Vital Torah, he would not need to remain in this world.

Rav Chaim Vital writes that the Arizal told him as follows: "He said to me that my *neshamah* comes from high places and I could have a tremendous *aliyah* through my existing *neshamah*, through my actions. I could rise above the highest of heavens." (Sha'ar Hagilgulim, Hakdama 38).

"I asked him to tell me what the *shoresh* of my *neshamah* is. He didn't want to explain all the details to me, but he said, I'm going to reveal to you some general principles." He said, a number of lifetimes ago, there was a person named Rebbi Chaim Vidal (Vidal of Tolosa, late 14th century). He authored a famous *sefer* on the Rambam called the *Maggid Mishneh*. That's the same name that you have now. Now your name is Chaim Vital. The name of the *Maggid Mishneh* was Chaim Vidal. The *dalei* and the *tes* are interchangeable.

Then the Arizal said to Rav Chaim Vital, "After the *Maggid Mishneh*, you came back as a *gilgul* of a man named Rav Shaul Trishti. And then you came back in the *gilgul* of a *neshamah* named Reb Yehoshua Soriano. Reb Yehoshua was a very rich man. He was a *chacham*. He was a *ba'al tzedakah*. He was somebody who came early and stayed late in the *batei kenessios* and the *batei medrashos*. Then afterwards, you came back as a *gilgul*, as a *bachur* named Avraham, who died when he was thirteen. The next time you came back is right now, and you are therefore called Chaim Vital, after your original name."

Then the Arizal revealed why the last three *gilgulim* came back.

Listen to this because it's very insightful. Rav Chaim Vital writes: "The Arizal told me that every *gilgul* that I came back for was for me to be *mesaken* something that I did wrong in my previous *gilgul*. The *Maggid Mishneh* had to come back. He was a tremendous *tzaddik*, a tremendous *talmid chacham*. But he sinned inadvertently." For example, if one had some sand in his shoe and was unaware of it on Shabbos, that would be an *aveirah b'shogeig*.

This is unbelievable. Speaking about carrying inadvertently on Shabbos, I once saw a *talmid chacham* who I consider a very big *talmid chacham*. It was before Shabbos, and he was checking his suit that he was going to wear for Shabbos. He was looking to see if there was any lint and was picking each one out. He was *mamash* checking his garment like it was a *sefer Torah*. I said, "What in the world are you doing?" He said, "It's *shtait in halachah*. You're supposed to check your garments beforehand so you don't walk out carrying something by mistake." He was checking each pocket inside out. I was thinking, "Wow!" Then I remembered this story about Rav Chaim Vital (and although the *aveirah b'shogeg* in that story was different), I said, that's exactly what could happen if we inadvertently forget. We walk out with things in our pockets all the time. We don't even check our pockets even though in the *Bameh Madlikin* it says you're supposed to check your clothes. You see some people at least putting their hands in their pockets when they say *Bameh Madlikin*. They're checking a little bit. In any case, we are learning here that a small act of a *shogeg* made the *Maggid Mishneh* come back.

Now, R' Chaim says: "I was faced with the exact same sin (that the *Maggid Mishneh* was faced with)." That's what happens. Hashem brings the same *aveirah* to you again and you have a second opportunity, and if you correct it, that's the *tikun*. He said, "If I would have passed the test, I would have fulfilled my mission, and it would have been a great accomplishment to complete the years of the *Maggid Mishneh's* life (who had left the world 44 before his time, as a result of that *aveirah b'shogeg*). But I blew it a second time. Even though the sin that R' Chaim did was a relatively very small sin and he did it *beshogeg* - he didn't do it intentionally, but by accident - still in all, since he came to the world for that specific purpose, to be *mesaken* that *ma'aseh* and he didn't pass the test, therefore he would live for only 44 years. It's unbelievable! But the Arizal told him: "Maybe you could be *mesaken* it through *teshuvah*." So Rav Chaim Vital fasted for three days, one after another, one, two and three. After he fasted, he came to his *rebbe* again, the Arizal, who said, "The slate is wiped clean; *tehillah leKel*." (R' Chaim Vital lived until the age of 77).

Can you imagine that? The Arizal told Rav Chaim Vital there's an *eitzah*, even if you messed up on something!

He also said another thing happened to the *Maggid Mishneh*, which also caused him to come back again, even though the main reason that he had to come back was what we just said. What happened was that one time, a *shaylah* of an *אשת איש* came to the *Maggid Mishneh*. There was a question regarding whether a certain woman, known to be married, was permitted to remarry due to a certain situation. The *Maggid Mishneh* permitted her to get remarried. But it was a mistake. It was really forbidden. The Arizal told Rav Chaim Vital that he was once also presented with a *shaylah* of an *אשת איש*, and made a similar mistake. It was when Rav Chaim Vital was a young *bachur*. A question of an *אשת איש* came before his *rebbe*, the Alshich Hakadosh (1508-1593). Rav Chaim discussed the issue with the Alshich, and then he said, "I think she's *mutar*." The Alshich agreed with him, and they permitted her to get remarried. But because he didn't look into the *din* well enough, he made a mistake. Rav Chaim Vital says that the Arizal revealed to him that the only reason that *shaylah* came to him was in order to rectify what he had done when his *neshamah* was in the *Maggid Mishneh*. If he would have looked into it more intensely, he wouldn't have erred and would have rectified that sin. So, in the future, he will be presented with such a *shaylah* again, and when he answers correctly, he will rectify it. That's what Rav Chaim Vital says the Arizal told him. Unbelievable!

Then R' Chaim Vital writes that R' Yehoshua Soriano came back for one reason. One time he ate a forbidden *cheilev* from an animal. In a *beheimah*, there's a certain part of the fat that is totally forbidden to eat. R' Yehoshua ate it knowingly and intentionally, and he wasn't careful with it, so he had to come back to rectify that sin. Rav Chaim said, "Even now in my lifetime, I'm being *mesaken* that *aveirah*." How? He said, "I'll give you the *siman*." He said: "It takes me two hours to devein an animal (i.e. remove that fat), which is an exceptionally long amount of time. My *rebbe* said, 'Why do you think you're so *medakdek* in that? Why are you so nervous about that? Because your *neshamah*

came back to this world because of the *aveirah* of eating *cheilev*.² Also, my *rebbe* said: 'You throw away double the meat with the fat because of your concerns. From now on, because that is your *tikun*, never let deveined meat go in your mouth, unless you know that it was done by an expert and a *chassid*!''

He also said to me, in one of those last *gilgulim*, I was a *mohel* and a *shochet*, by the name R' Shaul Trishti. One time, I had a *milah* early in my career, and I really wasn't a *baki*. I did the *milah*, and the child died. It was a *shogeg karov lemezid*.

It turns out the first case was a *shogeg*. The second one *shogeg karov lemezid*. The third one was *mezid gamur*. It was עבירה גוררת עבירה. The Arizal explained that's why now R' Chaim Vital stays very distanced from being a *mohel* or a *shochet* and can't even look when someone's doing *milah* or *shechitah*.

"When I came back as that *bachur* Avraham, and I died when I was 13, that was for the *aveirah* of having eaten in the previous lifetime the *cheilev bemeizid*. That's why I died young."

This is such an eye-opener. You know what I see from all this? We're talking about a person who is now Rav Chaim Vital! He was the heir of the Arizal. The Arizal was sent by Hashem to be *mesaken* this person's *neshamah* and to make it *mushlam*, complete. This *tzaddik* in the last few generations made some blunders. Now, when you say, "Oh, those are big blunders," I will tell you, "Trust me, it's nothing compared to our blunders." They had one *cheit*, but that was enough to get him to come back as a *gilgul* to be *mesaken* it. Sometimes you wonder. You see a *rasha* and the guy is being *mechallel kol davar shebekedushah*. He is transgressing many *isurei kares* and you see he's not dying. The guy is living. The guy is making it. The guy is doing a great job. What's the *pshtat*? The answer is, sometimes the *kares* is not meted out in this world. It's meted out in the next lifetime.

GILGULIM IN OUR GENERATION - YOUNG CHILDREN

Here is a young couple who gives birth to a child and then they have to spend time in the hospital with this baby suffering tremendous *yesurim*. Unbelievable. But you know one thing. It's a *gilgul neshamah*. They were the parents appointed to oversee this child.

There was a child in Lakewood a couple of years ago named Malky Hirth, *alehah hashalom*.² She was a wonder child. What this girl accomplished in her life was mind-boggling. She only lived until the age of 7, but she wrote *drashos* and *chizukim*. Her *emunah* and her *bitachon*, the things she said and she expressed, were beyond belief. She almost never went to school. From when she was a little child, she was in the hospital for years, battling leukemia. They wrote a whole book about her with such testimonials, the things she wrote, and did, and said, and accomplished in her short life. *Goyim*, Yidden, people who came in contact with her were mind-blown! How did she become like that? Some want to say her father and mother trained her. It wasn't *shayach*. I'm sure they were amazingly special parents, extremely supportive and encouraging, but it was a special special *neshamah* that she had, that had to be *mesaken* something. And that *tikun* is something that we have to acknowledge.

² Ed. note: the following is a short excerpt from an online article about this truly remarkable girl, a"n: "At the young age of two, Malky's pure closeness to Hashem was already apparent. 'I wish I could be a bird,' Malky said to her mother one day while walking outside. 'Then I would be able to sing to Hashem all day!' Malky overflowed with thanks to Hashem, singing songs of gratitude for everything in her life. Thanks for her family, thanks for the sun and the stars, thanks for the trees and the grass. And again and again, thanks to Hashem for her life. During the five-and-a-half years in which she was treated for leukemia, Malky's love for Hashem grew to unfathomable proportions. Throughout her long stays at the hospital, her many surgeries and painful medical procedures, Malky continued to raise her voice in joyful singing and dancing, twirling with genuine happiness. She remained full of fun, holding tight to her *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem and never letting go. Once, on her way to the emergency room with a raging fever and the onset of yet another infection, Malky turned to her father and said, 'I talk to Hashem, I sing to Hashem. I thank Him for my life. Even though I would like it to be different, I know Hashem has a plan for me...the best possible plan...'" (www.baltimorejewishlife.com)

GILGULIM OF IYOV AND CHANA

We all know the famous story of Iyov. Everybody knows Iyov is the symbol of *yesurim*, the symbol of a person who was wealthy, successful, and who also suffered tremendously. There's a whole book on Iyov's suffering. His discussion with his friends, the whys, the whats, the ins and the outs of this. And the question is, why? Why was such a nice man, a tremendous *ba'al chessed*, subject to such suffering? He did a lot of *chessed*. *Chazal* wonder what the difference was between him and Avraham Avinu. You know what kind of *kasha* that is? They don't ask that *kasha* about anybody else. He was in that league! They say a difference. But what's the *pshat*? Gilgulim.

When the Arizal came, you know what he revealed? He said Iyov was a *gilgul* of Terach, the father of Avraham. Terach did terrible things. He was an *oved avodah zarah*. He wasn't supportive of his child, Avraham. He wouldn't listen to the *emes*. He actually handed his own child, Avraham, over to the authorities, and he was put into a fire! Avraham was put into jail. Terach committed tremendous *aveiros*. But now you know what he had to be *mesaken*. Terach had an opportunity, but he missed it. To be *mesaken* his *neshamah*, he came back as Iyov, and he suffered tremendously. The Torah reveals to us the suffering that he had to endure for all his *aveiros*.

Now, Ramo MiPano (1548-1620) adds a very interesting thing. He says that the wife of Terach who was the mother of Avraham (Amaslai bas Karnevo) also tried to prevent Avraham from being *moser nefesh* for *kiddush Hashem*.³ She tried very hard to convince him to give up his philosophies, his "*narishkeit*" and so they also gave her an opportunity. You know what her *tikun* was? She came back as Chana. Chana, who was the mother of those seven children whom she had to sacrifice, had to be *moser* her kids when Antiochus tried to get them to do idol worship. Remember that story? Unbelievable. You know what it says in *gemara* in *Gittin* (57b)? It says that after all her seven kids died, she said, בני, my children, לכו ואמרו לאברהם אביכם, go and say to Avraham your father, ואני עקדתי שבעה, you made an *akeidah* one time, with Yitzchak, מזבח אחד, מזבח אחד. You know what she was telling him? I was *mesaken* the *cheit*. I tried to get you not to be *moser nefesh*. I was *mesaken* it by offering up seven children.

THIS SHOULD PROMPT US TO DO TESHUVAH

Now you know what this does? It reveals to us such revelations. Now we can understand some of the horror stories that we heard or we read about the Holocaust. Hashem keeps the *cheshbon* and sometimes, a person who murdered somebody, has to come back to this world to now father that person as a child and bring him back to the world. Just like he took him out of the world, now he has to bring him back to the world. Sometimes, I see children act in ways that are very challenging to parents and the parents want to know, "What in the world did I do to this child?" These are *cheshbonos* from Hashem. Sometimes these are *gilgulim*. Maybe you once did something to that child in a previous lifetime and now the child senses that.

The Ramak (1522-1570), in his sefer *Shiur Komah*, relates that there was a certain adulterer who had died. He came back in the *gilgul* of a *kelev*, a dog, who then went and killed the adulteress. The dog itself went and killed the adulteress! And then the son that was born from this adulterous act killed the dog, and then that son died. The reason is because Hashem wants to rid the world of *mamzerim*. He was a *mamzer*. And everybody is thinking, "*Shrek*. What happened here?" Maybe there were rumors. Ramak said that people didn't know what really happened. This dog was a *gilgul* of the adulterer. The Ramak writes בעינינו בראינו בעינינו, we saw the whole chain of events with our own eyes, but sometimes it takes years until the *neshamah* comes back.

³ אמתלאה בת כרנבו אשתו של תרח אמו של אברהם אבינו עליו השלום [סנהדרין צ"ה ב.], נתקנה בהאשה עם שבעה בניה דהמיתים המלך כנזכר בדברי רבותינו ז"ל בגיטין פרק הניקין [נ"ז ב.], דאמרה תתם בני לכו ואמרו לאברהם אביכם, אתה עקדת מזבח אחד ואני עקדת שמעה מזבחות, אתה נסיון ואני מעשה, וגם היא עלתה על הגג ומתה, וכמו שתרח נתקן באיוב על ידי יסורין, וכאן גם היא נתקנה על ידי יסורין אשר באו עליה, ויצתה בת קול ואמרה לא הבנים שמחה, ושם נמרוד השליח אברהם בנה לכבשן האש ולא עשה רושם, וכאן עשה רושם לתיקונה על קידוש השם. (גלגולי נשמות לרמ"ע מפאנו, אות א')

You could have big *talmidei chachamim* and big *tzaddikim* who need *tikunim* for things they did in previous lifetimes. Hakadosh Baruch Hu presents them with these *tikunim*, and in that way, they're *mashlim* themselves. So understand that if you messed up, do *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* helps because the whole requirement of coming back is if you didn't do *teshuvah*. And don't delay doing *teshuvah* because maybe you won't be *zocheh* to do the *teshuvah* at the proper time.

Right now, when people are home and they're bored, it's a good time to ponder and think about their previous actions. To think and analyze their lives. (The *shiur* was given over during the Covid-19 pandemic).

FIX UP RATHER THAN RUN AWAY FROM THE CHESHBON

Many people have challenging wives. Many people have challenging husbands. People want to know, "Why did it happen to me?" Here is a woman who said, "I can't take my husband any more. He's emotionally a little disordered." I said, "Does he beat you?" "No." "Does he provide for you?" "Yes." I said, "You have a whole bunch of children already from him. Let me tell you. Don't run. Because you can't run from yourself. There are *cheshbonos* in *shamayim* for everything that happens. Maybe in a previous lifetime you were this man's wife and you caused him *tzaros tzeruros*. Maybe you weren't as sweet as you are now. So now Hashem says, "You've got to pay it back."

I know somebody who suffered from a very, very tough situation, a wife that was untenable. He was able to handle it, but his wife was really not well. A lot of people told him to get divorced. He went to an *adam gadol* who told him, "No. Don't get divorced. The fact that you could handle it shows that that's what Hashem's plan was for you." And then it was revealed to him through a certain way, that in the previous lifetime, he caused his wife a lot of *tzaros*. I told the guy, "Remember this." He was supposed to fix it up with *chessed*.

And a very strange thing happened. He did it for a number of years. He tolerated it. He did *chessed* with her and all kinds of wonderful things. Then one day, something snapped. He said, "I'm not doing it anymore." I'm thinking, he had an opportunity to be *mesaken* himself, and what did he do instead? He repeated the mistake. He couldn't hold out for so long so he *pashut* went back to his old ways. He turned against her and of course, he said she was crazy. I said to the guy, "For years, you were able to tolerate it. You carried it and you did it." He said, "I can't do it. Enough is enough." What a sad situation. I said, "You're not going to get out of this. You're committing yourself to a lifetime of *tzaros* until your last day. That's a terrible tragedy. And if you tolerate it and you accept it and you ask Hashem to give you the strength to be *mesaken* yourself and do some *teshuvah*, then perhaps you'll be *zocheh* to some happy days and some better days."

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us all find *menuchas hanefesh* in this world to be able to carry on in the next world.

PART 2: TESHUVA COMES FROM SHABBOS (5769)

INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF TESHUVAH

I saw a very interesting *yesod* in a sefer of R' Tzadok HaKohen (1823-1900) on the topic of *Shabbos Teshuvah*. Reb Tzadok writes as follows. The whole *koach* of *teshuvah* comes from the *koach* of Shabbos. The whole power for us to do *teshuvah* comes from the gift of Shabbos. Meaning to say, if not for the gift of Shabbos, there would be no power for a person to do *teshuvah*. This needs to be understood.

What is the *shaychus* of *teshuvah* to Shabbos? When Adam Harishon ate from the tree after Hashem forbade him to do so, he became very depressed (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:3).⁴ He realized how he had messed up. Hakadosh Baruch Hu told him, "Adam, do *teshuvah*." Hakadosh Baruch Hu opened a *pesach* for him, and showed him how to correct his *cheit*. Adam Harishon did not want to do it. Chazal say, אמר לו, "do *teshuvah* still, הקדוש ברוך הוא אפילו עכשיו *teshuvah* still, ואני מקבליך, and I will accept you. Adam responded and said, אי אפשר, "It is not possible." You hear? Hashem told Adam Harishon to do *teshuvah* and emphasized, "I'm telling you, you could do *teshuvah*." And what did Adam Harishon say? "It's impossible." What's the *pshat*? The *pshat* is *azei*. Adam Harishon could not believe or fathom the concept of *teshuvah*.

MISHPAT: TESHUVAH IS NOT POSSIBLE

There is a famous *Yalkut* on a *pasuk* in Tehillim (Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim 702). Chazal say on the *pasuk* (Tehillim 25:8), טוב וישר ה', Hashem is *tov* and Hashem is *yashar*, and therefore Hashem guides and instructs the sinners on the *derech* of *teshuvah*. The *Yalkut* brings down a *midrash* that says as follows: *Be'emes*, according to the concepts of *chochmah* and according to the concepts of *nevuah*, and the dictates of the Torah, indeed, *teshuvah* is not *shayach*. Chazal say they asked people of *chochmah*, people of the *nevuah*, they asked the Torah, "What should a sinner do if he sins?" And each one answered that *teshuvah* is not *shayach*.

But when they asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "You could do it." There's a *derech*, the way, that a *choteh* does *teshuvah*.

I want to tell you what Chazal are telling us. Chazal are telling us that in any of those *hanhagos*, the world is based on a system of *mishpat*. The world has a system of Torah. The world has a system of *chochmah*. The world has a system of *nevuah*. Based on all the systems in this world, it is not *shayach* to have *teshuvah*. You have to know that *teshuvah* is something that is not *shayach* to the *sheshes yemei hamaaseh*. Where does *teshuvah* come from? Chazal tell us that the power of *teshuvah* preceded the world.

What does that mean? That means Hakadosh Baruch Hu created 'a world of *teshuvah*' before He even created the world. What is the world of *teshuvah*? It means a world where somebody who is dirty, someone who sinned, could enter and take a shower. It means he can enter that world and it removes the *cheit*. The world of *teshuvah* is such a world, that in our world there is no place for that world. This is called the ultimate *giluy* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

We have to realize that the world of *teshuvah* is from Hakadosh Baruch Hu's highest revelations. In this world, there are many secrets. There is *chochmas hakabbalah*, for example. *Kabbalah* is *shayach* to that world. Part of the universe is *kabbalah*. How Hashem created the world, all the goings on, and Hashem's plans, מה גדלו מעשיך ה', it's all part of the world. *Teshuvah* is *bichlal* not even *shayach* to the *toras hanistar*, it's not *shayach* to *toras hakabbalah*. *Teshuvah* is *lemaaleh* from the כולו העולם כולו. There is nothing about this world that says that if a person sins and he does *teshuvah*, that it's possible to take away that *maaseh*.

⁴ ויהי המקריב ביום הראשון את קרבנו נחשו, וגו' (במדבר ז, יב), הָדָא הוּא דְכִתִּיב (משלי טז, כג): גִּאוּת אָדָם תִּשְׁפִּילֵנּוּ וְיִשְׁפַל רוּחַ יִתְמָךְ כְּבֹד, אָמַר רַבִּי תַנְחוּמָא בְרַ אַבָּא גִאוּת אָדָם תִּשְׁפִּילֵנּוּ, זֶה אָדָם הָרָאשׁוֹן, כִּי־צַד בְּשַׁעוֹ שֶׁעָבַר אָדָם עַל צְוִיוֹ שֶׁל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָחַל מִן הָאֵיל, בִּקֵּשׁ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שִׁינְעִיָה תְשׁוּבָה וּפְתַח לוֹ פֶתַח, וְלֹא בִקֵּשׁ אָדָם, הָדָא הוּא דְכִתִּיב (בראשית ג, כב): וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם גּוֹי' אָמַר רַבִּי אַבָּא בַר כְּהֵנָה מֵהוּ וְעֵתָה, אֵלָא שְׂאֵמֶר לוֹ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶפְלוּ עֲלֵיו עֲשֵׂה תְשׁוּבָה וְאֵינִי מְקַבְּלָהּ, וְאָמַר אָדָם אֵי אֶפְשִׁי. הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אָמַר וְעֵתָה, וְאָמַר אָדָם פֹּן, אֵי אֶפְשִׁי. אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן לֵקִישׁ כִּי־וַיֵּצֵא אָדָם מִן הַדִּין הַתְחִיל מִתְרַף וּמִגְדָּף, וְאָמַר כָּאֵן קָרְבִּים, (בראשית ג, כד): וַיִּשְׁכַּן מִקְדָּשׁ לְגַן עֵדֶן אֶת הַקָּרְבִּים, וְנִאֲמַר בְּסִנְחַרְבֵי קָרְבִּים, (ישעיה לז, טז): ה' צְבָאוֹת יוֹשֵׁב הַקָּרְבִּים, מֵה לְהֵלן חֲרוּפִים וְגִדּוּפִים, אֶף קָרְבִּים שְׂנֵאֲמֶר כָּאֵן חֲרוּפִים וְגִדּוּפִים, הֵינִי גִאוּת אָדָם תִּשְׁפִּילֵנּוּ, לִפִּי שְׁנַתְגָּאָה עַל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַעֲשׂוֹת תְשׁוּבָה הַשְׁפִּיל אוֹתוֹ וְגִרְשׁוּ מִגֵּן עֵדֶן, וְשִׁפַל רוּחַ יִתְמָךְ כְּבֹד, זֶה אַבְרָהָה שֶׁהִשְׁפִּיל רוּחוֹ וְאָמַר (בראשית יח, כז): וְאָנֹכִי עֹפֵר וְאֹפֵר, לֶכְךָ קָרָא אוֹתוֹ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא (יהושע יד, טו): הָאָדָם הַגָּדוֹל בְּעַנְקָיו, שֵׁם זֶה גָדוֹל מִן אָדָם הָרָאשׁוֹן, וְכו'.

AWAKENING GILUI HASHEM AND TESHUVAH

You have to know what is *me'orer* the opportunity for *teshuvah* - it is Shabbos. Without Shabbos, we would have no comprehension and no understanding of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, or any of the *giluyim* of Hashem in this world of hiddenness, in this world of darkness. Similarly, without Shabbos, we would have no concept and no comprehension of *teshuvah*. You have to know the window into the world of *teshuvah* is only through Shabbos.

Olam hazeh is *domeh* to a *midbar*. A person was sent into this 'midbar' from his place next to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. In *olam hazeh*, when a person follows and gets drawn after the *yetzer hara*, you know what he's forgetting? He forgets the Shabbos. He forgets Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He forgets His *olam haneshamos*. And then the day comes that the person decides that he wants to come back to Hashem with *teshuvah*, and now he wants to go with what we call 'clean clothes,' he wants to wear *begadim nekiyim*, and he wants to remember and live with that concept of Shabbos. That person has to know that the *yesod* of his whole *teshuvah* is coming from Shabbos.

REVEALING HASHEM IN THE WORLD

The Reishis Chochmah in *Sha'ar Hakedushah* explains the *yesod* of Shabbos: we connect with the reality of this world because it is Hakadosh Baruch Hu's world. When a person does a *cheit* he goes away from that connection. The Ramchal explains the *yesod* of the *briah* of this world is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted to reveal His *yichud*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to reveal Himself. What did Hashem want to reveal? Everything that is expressed in אחרון אני ראשון אני אחרון. כי אני ראשון אני אחרון. The job Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave us in this world is to take all *klalah* and turn it into *brachah*. Where does the *klalah* come from? Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted the world to be a place where He could be *megaleh* Himself, reveal Himself, so He created in the world a *makom* of *hester*. He created *mekomos* that are *choshech* and Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to go and take that *choshech*, the *ra* that is in the world, and He wants us to remove that *ra* from the world. If we remove the *ra* from the world, what happens is, we restore the *yichud* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Ramchal says that is the *ikar emunah* of Klal Yisrael - to know the *yichud* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world, He was *metzamtzem* Himself, he limited Himself, limited His Presence, so that we could feel Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The whole reason for this world is so that we could reveal Hakadosh Baruch Hu's Presence in it.

So what happens is like this. Every time we get involved with *cheit*, instead of being *megaleh*, revealing the *yichud* of Hashem, what are we doing? We are adding and increasing the *choshech* and the hiddenness of this world. So every *cheit* we do is in direct opposition, in direct contradiction to our whole purpose in this world, which is to reveal the *yichud* of Hashem. Our purpose is to minimize the *ra*, to enhance the *kavod* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And instead, when a person does an *aveirah*, he is increasing the *choshech*. Every one of us, as a member of Klal Yisrael, has a job to reveal and be *mevaer* the *ra* in the world. Instead, what do we do? We get involved in *chata'im*. And when we get involved in *chata'im*, we increase the *choshech* in the world.

REVEALING LIGHT IN YOUR OLAM KATAN

Now, just as it applies to the world, it applies to every person on an individual level. Every person is considered an *olam katan*, a small world. Every one of us has a *neshamah* within ourselves. That *neshamah* is in a hidden form. That means, just like Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu hid His presence from this world and wants us to reveal His presence, the same thing is true with every person. Every person has within himself a *neshamah*. That *neshamah* is a *chelek elokah mima'al* and that *neshamah* is hidden within us, and our whole *avodah* is to connect to

that *neshamah* and to bring it out! When a person does a *cheit*, what happens? The *cheit* is *marchik* him, it makes him distanced, it pulls him away from his *neshamah*, and he becomes an earthling, an *adam chumri*. By that, he distances himself from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Whenever a person does a *cheit*, he is increasing the *hester*, the hiddenness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

What happens when a person does *teshuvah*? When a person does *teshuvah*, a person enlightens himself. He brings a light to himself. He brings himself closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu's presence, firstly, to that place where he brought *choshech* to the world and, secondly, within his own *neshamah* as he connects to his own spirituality, his own *ruchniyus*. That brings the *ohr* into the person.

THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE WORLD: TESHUVAH

Look at the letters of the word שבת. The same root letters are found in the word תשובה. The whole idea of Shabbos is from the word *tashuv*. The whole idea of Shabbos is returning the world to Hashem. That is what we do on Shabbos. The Maharal says (Nesivos Olam, Nesiv HaTeshuva, Perek 2) as follows: עיקר הפירוש מה שהוא שב אל השם יתברך בכל לבבו ובכל נפשו, ומה שהוא שב אל השם יתברך, שהעולם הזה שב אל השם יתברך, that a person returns to Hashem with all his heart and all his soul. And he says like this, שהעולם הזה שב אל השם יתברך, that this world returns to Hashem Yisborach. The whole *tachlis* of this world that we are in - what's the order of this world? The order of the world is to return Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and thereby cause the *giluy* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. ואין לו קיום מצד עצמו. The whole existence of the world is only justified insofar that it is being *giluy* שם אל השם יתברך. The Maharal says, וזהו עצמו this itself is the *zechus ha'adam*. This itself, that the person is following the *sefer ha'olam* of returning to Hashem is a *zechus* for the person! When a *choteh* does *teshuvah* and returns to Hashem, what happens? Maharal says, החוטא הוא שנתרחק מן השם יתברך על ידי חטאו, והריחוק הוא מחייב השב אל השם יתברך, that through his *chet* the sinner is distanced from Hashem, and this distancing obligates a person to return to Hashem; ולפיכך הריחוק הוא מחייב השב אל השם יתברך, and this distancing becomes a merit for him when he returns to Hashem (out of love)! This is the whole essence of *teshuvah*.⁵

THE POWERFUL EFFECTS OF TESHUVAH

When we think about the concept of *teshuva*, we have to understand that it's not just a matter of 'behaving' and 'not doing bad things.' It has to be a *mehalech* of us 'returning' to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to restore the *sefer ha'olam*. This is the real meaning within the concept of *teshuvah*.

In the past, we've spoken about the fact that when a person does *aveiros*, he separates the *vav* from the *hei* in the *yud kay vav kay*. Whenever we do an *aveirah*, we separate, we make *pegamim* in the Presence of Hashem, and *teshuvah* means *tashuv hei*. You restore the *hei*. You separated the *vav* and the *hei* in the *yud kay vav kay*, and *teshuvah* restores the *hei* to the *vav*. We bond back with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

⁵ אמנם עיקר הפירוש כי התשובה מה שהוא שב אל הש"י בכל לבבו ובכל נפשו, ודבר זה הוא סדר העולם שהעולם הזה שב אל הש"י ואין לו קיום מצד עצמו רק שהוא שב אל הש"י אשר ממנו הוא נמצא ואילו שבים כל הנמצאים, וזהו קיום שלהם מפני שהם שבים אל הש"י, ובדבר זה הארכנו בפ' משה קבל מה שהעולם עומד על העבודה הוא מטעם שהעולם יש לו השבה אל הש"י והוא קיומו וזולת זה לא היה קיום אל העולם, ודבר שהוא סדר העולם שכך ברא הש"י את העולם וזה עצמו זכות האדם כאשר האדם נמשך אחר סדר העולם אשר סידר השם ית', כי זהו ענין כל התורה שהיא סדר העולם שסידר הש"י את העולם, ומפני כי התשובה היא שהנמצאים שבים אל הש"י כמו שנמצאו ממנו וזה ג"כ הוא סדר העולם, ולכן כאשר החוטא שב אל הש"י נעשים הדדונות שלו כזכיות שהרי יש כאן השבה אל הש"י כמו שהוא סדר העולם, ולכן החוטא הזה שנתרחק מן הש"י על ידי חטאו והריחוק הוא מחייב ההשבה אל הש"י, ולפיכך הריחוק הזה נעשית לו זכיות כאשר יש כאן השבה אל הש"י. ודוקא כאשר התשובה מתוך אהבה שכאשר התשובה היא מתוך אהבה אשר האהבה הוא הדבוק ב'ית' לגמרי כמו שנאמר לאהבה את ה' אלקיך ולדבקה בו, לכן התשובה שהוא סדר העולם שיהיה העולם דבוק בו יתברך שיהיה לעולם קיום, ומפני כי אין דבקות רק מכה אהבה לכן כאשר התשובה היא מתוך אהבה דוקא נחשב לו הדדונות כזכיות, במה שזכיות כל הנמצאים מה שהם שבים אל הש"י וזהו סדר העולם לכן זה שהוא שב אל הש"י כאשר ראו אל הבראה להיות דבקים מתוך אהבה דדונות נעשים כזכיות, ולאו הדברים אין לפרש אותם לעומק שלהם (נתיבות עולם, נתיב התשובה ב')

So this Shabbos, see Shabbos in its power. It is the only way that a person is going to return himself to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and the only way a person is going to be able to key into the *olam hateshuvah*. That's why it says (Shabbos 118b) if a person is *shomer Shabbos kehilchoso*, he is forgiven for all his sins, even the *avonos* of *avodah zarah*. What does that mean? It means that even for a *pgam* that had such an *onesh*, a *pegam* of *avodah zarah* which could bring a tremendous *roshem*, it's *shayach* for a person to come back to the *olam hateshuvah* through Shabbos! You understand, such a *koach* of teshuvah doesn't come *stam* from eating *cholent* and from eating gefilte fish, but it comes from a person utilizing the Shabbos, and trying to take out from the Shabbos some restoration of the wrong that he did.

7 STEPS TO A SHABBOS WITH A HIGHER PURPOSE

Every one of us should feel and should be *mechaven* that our *maasim*, our *pe'ulos*, and our whole existence have a higher purpose. (1) We should first acknowledge what our existence was. It was a complete contradiction from the *tachlis* of the *brias ha'olam*. (2) On this Shabbos [this shiur was said before Shabbos Shuvah 5769], we should be *mechaven* to, at least, be aware and ask ourselves, "What is the *tachlis* of the *brias ha'olam*?" (3) We should attempt throughout this Shabbos to notice what we can do to restore our connection to Hashem. Even for a few moments throughout the Shabbos, take off some time, but do it a number of times throughout the Shabbos. Say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I'm learning Torah this Shabbos because I appreciate the gift of Shabbos. And by learning Torah on Shabbos, I want to be *megaleh*, and say *eidus* on the *yichud* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. I want to diminish a little more darkness from this world." (4) When you eat on Shabbos, it can be a plate of natural materialism. But if you eat *lekovod Shabbos*, a person says, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, today it's a *mitzvah* to eat *lekovod Shabbos*. Today, it's a *mitzvah* to eat *le'oneg Shabbos*." What you are doing is, you are restoring Hakadosh Baruch Hu's Presence in this world of *choshech*. (5) Whenever you talk to somebody, think, "It is the *dibbur* of Hashem." (6) *Im yirtzeh Hashem* Shabbos, in the *beis hamidrash*, at least, let's try not to mess up in the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. At least in the *makom Torah*. (7) Altogether, by using these steps to experience Shabbos with a higher purpose, we should attempt to key into this *koach* of teshuvah which we get from the *koach* of Shabbos.

In that *zechus*, we will be *zoche* hopefully, to get some *kapparah* and to get some *tikkun* for our *maasim*.

IN SUMMARY

As a chessed from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, great tzaddikim who lived near-perfect lives were sometimes presented with an opportunity to do tikunim as their neshamos came back to this world as gilgulim. This enabled them to do tikunim for things they did in previous lifetimes. This phenomenon still apparently occurs in our days, when we see otherwise inexplicable events occurring around us. We can appreciate the power of Hashem to enact justice even over many centuries. We can also take the opportunity to see difficulties in our own lives or in the lives of people we know of, as darkei Hashem, as He gives us and them an opportunity to do a tikkun. Rather than seeing challenges as meaningless suffering, we can see them as an avenue to understand the ways of Hashem. This week (bli neder), when I think of the suffering that I or someone I know is facing, alongside feeling for their suffering and davening for rachamei Shamayim, I will focus for a few moments on the possibility that Hashem is giving a holy neshamah a tikun and on the opportunity to do teshuvah.

Adam Harishon initially could not imagine that there could be a concept such as teshuvah. If the world would run only on a system of mishpat there would be no possibility for teshuvah. However, Hashem put the derech of teshuvah into the world, and it is a gilui Hashem of the highest form. Shabbos is me'orer the opportunity for teshuvah. Shabbos is our opportunity to decrease the ra, and to enhance the kavod of Hakadosh Baruch Hu by revealing it in the world and doing teshuvah. This Shabbos (bli neder), I will try to incorporate some practical steps toward teshuvah into my Shabbos, such as positively restoring my connection to Hashem by saying, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, this Shabbos I'm learning Torah to be megaleh the yichud of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and diminish the darkness," by remembering that my speech and eating is Shabbosdik, and by behaving with higher purpose in the beis hamidrash.

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