

# EMOTIONAL GROWTH

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*Guilt*

*LESSON 2*

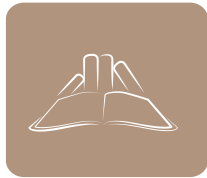
# ***GLOSSARY***



## **PROFILE**

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A brief biographical account of the author noted in the body text



## **EXORDIUM**

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A brief characterization of the noted book



Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maiman, better known by his acronym Ramba"m or Maimonides, was perhaps one of the most influential Rabbis to have ever lived. He was born in Cordova, Spain, toward the beginning of the 12th century, and wrote extensively on all areas of Jewish thought – legal, expository, and philosophical. His main works were his groundbreaking *Mishneh Torah*, the first attempt at a systematic codification of Jewish law, and his *Moreh Nevuchim* – A Guide for the Perplexed, a philosophical treatise aimed at synthesizing then contemporary philosophy with traditional Jewish thought.



Tzava'at Harivash, literally “The testament of R' Yisroel Baal Shem,” is from the earliest printed Chassidic manuscripts, containing an anthology of the Baal Shem Tov and Mezritcher Maggid's teachings. Its wide distribution and simplistic phraseology established it as the manifesto of Chassidism, covering such fundamental Chassidic ideas as D'veikut (cleaving to God), prayer, joy, and love of a fellow.

## TEXT 1

What constitutes teshuvah? That a sinner should abandon his sins and remove them from his thoughts, resolving in his heart, never to commit them again, as [Isaiah 55:7] states: “Let the wicked abandon his ways...” Similarly, he must regret the past, as [Jeremiah 31:18] states: “After I returned, I regretted.” [He must reach the level where] He who knows the hidden will testify concerning him that he will never return to this sin again, as [Hoshea 14:4] states: “We will no longer say to the work of our hands: ‘You are our gods.’” He must verbally confess and state these matters which he resolved in his heart.

*Mishneh Torah, Laws of Teshuvah 2:2*

ומה היא התשובה. הוא שיעזב החטא ויסיירו ממחשבתו ויגמור בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד שנאמר (ישעיה נ"ה:ז) "יעזב רשע דרכו" וגו'. וכן יתנחם על שעבר שנאמר (ירמיה ל"א:ח) "כי אחרי שובי נחמתי". ויעיד עליו יודע תעלומות שלא ישוב לזה החטא לעולם שנאמר (הושע י"ד:ד) "ולא נאמר עוד אלהינו למעשה ידינו" וגו'. וצריך להתודות בשפתיו ולומר ענינות אלו שגמר בלבו

משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה ב:ב

## TEXT 2

**In this text, the Baal Shem Tov teaches that guilty feelings can come from the evil inclination as a ploy to make a person depressed, which will drain him of energy and confidence to fight the inner battle.**

[As you set out to serve God,] do not be overly punctilious in all you do. [To do so] is but a contrivance of the yetzer [hara] to make you apprehensive that you may not have fulfilled your obligation, in order to make you feel depressed. Depression, in turn, is an immense obstacle to the service of the Creator, blessed be He. Even if you did commit a sin, [Heaven forbid], do not be overly depressed, lest this stop your worship. Do feel saddened by the sin [and feel ashamed before the Creator, blessed be He, and beg him to remove your evil]; but then rejoice in the Creator, blessed be He, because you fully repented and resolved never to repeat your folly. Even if you are certain that you did not fulfill some obligation, because of a variety of obstacles, do not feel depressed. Bear in mind that the Creator, blessed be He, “searches the hearts and minds” (Psalms 7:10). He knows that you wish to do the best but were unable to do so. Thus, strengthen yourself to rejoice in the Creator, blessed be He.

*Tzavaat Harivash, sect. 46*

אל ירבה בדקדוקים יתירים בכל דבר שעושה, שזה כוונת היצר [הרע] לעשות לאדם מורא שמא אינו יוצא בדבר זה כדי להביא אותו לעצבות, ועצבות היא [מרה מגונה ו]מניעה גדולה לעבודת הבורא ית'. ואפילו [אם] נכשל בעבירה [ח"ו] לא ירבה בעצבות [ויסתור הבנין שלו ויקל ויפקיר עצמו, הואיל ויצא חוץ לגדרו], שיבוטל העבודה, רק שיעצב על העבירה [ויבוש מהבורא ית', ויתחנן לו להעביר את רעתו], ויחזור לשמוח בהבורא ית' כיון שהוא מתחרט בחרטה גמורה ובדעתו שלא ישוב לכסלתו בשום פעם. ואפילו כשיודע בודאי שאינו יוצא בדבר אחד מחמת מניעות הרבה לא יהיה עצב, ויחשוב שהבורא ית' בוחן לבות וכליות, שהוא יודע שרצונו לעשות מן המובחר, רק שאינו יכול, ויחזק עצמו לשמוח בהבורא ית'

צוואת הריב"ש סימן מ"ו

## Pushing Back on Guilt

The Tanya discusses various factors that contribute to a decrease in joy and energy. Among them are sadness and disappointment that come as result of things that happen to us. Another factor is guilt and self-judgement that follows the mistakes we made. The author dedicates a lot more discussion to overcoming guilty feelings than how to process disappointing circumstances. In the following text, the Tanya teaches how to differentiate between constructive and destructive forms of guilt.



Tanya, or The Book for the Intermediaries, is the seminal text of Chabad philosophy, authored by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first leader of Chabad. Based on the Biblical assurance that "This matter – the service of God - is indeed very close to you," the Tanya sets out to navigate the spiritual makeup of man, and lays out a systematic doctrine that works to incorporate every element of human experience within the Divine service. The Tanya serves as the basis for future Chabad teachings, which elaborate and expound upon its revolutionary ideas.

### TEXT 3

As for sadness connected with heavenly matters, one must seek ways and means of freeing oneself from it. That this applies to the time of one's Divine service is self-evident, for one must serve G-d with joy and gladness of heart. But even one who is occupied in business and worldly affairs, should there descend upon him any sadness or anxiety about heavenly matters during his business affairs, it is certainly a trick of the Evil Inclination in order to lure him afterwards into lusts, G-d forbid, as is well known. For if it were not so, whence would a genuine sadness, one that is derived from love or fear of G-d, come to him in the midst of his business affairs? Whether the depression settles upon him during his service of G-d in Torah study or prayer, or when he is not engaged thus, this is what he should consider: "Now is not the proper time for genuine sadness, nor even for worry over grave sins, G-d forbid. For this one must set aside opportune times, when the mind is calm, to reflect on the greatness of G-d against Whom he has sinned, so that thereby his heart will truly be rent with genuine bitterness. It is explained elsewhere when this time should be. There it is also explained that immediately after his heart has been broken during those appointed times, he should completely remove the sorrow from his heart, and he should believe with perfect faith that G-d has erased his sin, and that "He pardons abundantly." This is the true joy in G-d which follows the sadness, as explained above.

*Tanya, Likutei Amarim, chapter 26*

אך העצבות ממילי דשמיא צריך לשית עצות אך העצבות ממילי דשמיא צריך לשית עצות בנפשו לפטר ממנה אין צריך לומר בשעת עבודה שצריך לעבוד ה' בשמחה ובטוב לבב אלא אפילו מי שהוא בעל עסקים ודרך ארץ אם נופל לו עצב ודאגה ממילי דשמיא בשעת עסקיו בידוע שהוא תחבולת היצר כדי להפילו אח"כ בתאוות ה"ו כנודע שאל"כ מאין באה לו עצבות אמיתית מחמת אהבת ה' או יראתו באמצע עסקיו. והנה בין שנפלה לו העצבות בשעת עבודה בת"ת או בתפלה ובין שנפלה לו שלא בשעת עבודה זאת ישים אל לבו כי אין הזמן גרמא כעת לעצבות אמיתית אפ"ל לדאגת עונות חמורים ה"ו. רק לזאת צריך קביעות עתים ושעת הכושר בישוב הדעת להתבונן בגדול ה' אשר חטא לו כדי שע"י זה יהיה לבו נשבר באמת במרירות אמיתית וכמבואר עת זו במ"א ושם נתבאר ג"כ כי מיד אחר שנשבר לבו בעתים קבועים ההם אזי יסיר העצב מלבו לגמרי ויאמין אמונה שלימה כי ה' העביר חטאתו ורב לסלוח וזו היא השמחה האמיתית בה' הבאה אחר העצב כנ"ל תניא, לקוטי אמרים, פרק כ"ו

## Constructive Self-Reflection

The Tanya lists five criteria for constructive self-reflection that should follow mistakes:

1. You set the time for the self-reflection, so you are in control of the thought pattern, and it's not spontaneous.
2. Start with reflecting on the greatness of G-d.
3. Feel guilty about committing this mistake, and resolve to never make this mistake again.
4. Completely remove the feelings of guilt.
5. Believe that because you went through this process, G-d has forgiven you, and you are back on track with Him.

### TEXT 4

Very often, after a person has a negative thought, such as a disloyal thought, he judges himself harshly and concludes that he is a disloyal person. In this text, the Tanya teaches that this self-judgement is destructive. On the contrary, he should rejoice because he now has the opportunity to do a mitzvah by redirecting his attention from this negative thought.

If these thoughts occur to him not during his service of G-d, but while he is occupied with his own affairs and with mundane matters and the like, he should, on the contrary, be happy in his lot; for although these sinful thoughts enter his mind, he averts his attention from them. He fulfills the injunction, "You shall not follow after your heart and after your eyes, by which you go astray." The verse surely does not speak of tzaddikim, referring to them (G-d forbid) as "going astray," but of ordinary people like himself, in whose mind there do enter erotic thoughts, whether of an innocent nature [or otherwise], and when he averts his mind from them, he fulfills this injunction. Our sages have said: "When one passively abstains from sin, he is rewarded as though he had actively performed a mitzvah." Consequently, he should rejoice in his compliance with this injunction just as he does when performing an actual positive precept. On the contrary, such sadness is due to conceit. For he does not know his place, and that is why he is distressed because he has not attained the level of a tzaddik, to whom such foolish thoughts surely do not occur. For were he to recognize his station, that he is very far from the rank of tzaddik, and would that he be a beinoni, and not a rasha for even a single moment throughout his life,

then surely, this is the due measure of the beinonim and their task: to subdue the evil impulse and the thought that rises from the heart to the mind, and to completely avert his mind from it, repulsing it with both hands, as explained above.

*Tanya, Likutei Amarim, chapter 27*

הנה אם נופלות לו שלא בשעת העבודה, אלא בעת עסקו בעסקיו ודרך ארץ וכהאי גוונא, אדרבה יש לו לשמוח בחלקו, שאף שנופלות לו במחשבתו הוא מסיח דעתו מהם, לקיים מה שנאמר: ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם אשר אתם זונים אחריהם. ואין הכתוב מדבר בצדיקים לקראם זונים, חס ושלום, אלא בבינונים כיוצא בו, שנופלים לו הרהורי ניאוף במחשבתו, בין בהיתר כו', וכשמסיח דעתו, מקיים לאו זה. ואמרו רז"ל: ישב ולא עבר עבירה, נותנים לו שכר כאילו עשה מצוה. ועל כן צריך לשמוח בקיום הלאו כמו בקיום מצות עשה ממש, ואדרבה, העצבות היא מגסות הרוח שאינו מכיר מקומו, ועל כן ירע לבבו על שאינו במדרגת צדיק, שלצדיקים בודאי אין נופלים להם הרהורי שטות כאלו, כי אילו הי' מכיר מקומו, שהוא רחוק מאד ממדרגת צדיק, והלואי היה בינוני ולא רשע כל ימיו אפילו שעה אחת, הרי זאת היא מדת הבינונים ועבודתם, לכבוש היצר וההרהור העולה מהלב למוח, ולהסיח דעתו לגמרי ממנו ולדחותו בשתי ידים, כנ"ל

תניא, לקוטי אמרים, פרק כ"ז

