



Yom Kippur 5765

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*It so happened that I besmirched a fellow Jew behind his back. Fortunately the people I spoke to did not believe the slander. Must I ask his forgiveness?*

The *Chofetz Chaim*<sup>1</sup> writes that if the fellow Jew was not harmed in any way, i.e. his reputation was not tainted nor did his business suffer any losses as a result of the slander, the transgression remains an offence between man and his creator. Thus there is no need to tell the Jew that he was slandered and one must ask *Hashem* forgiveness for transgressing the offence of *Lashon Harah*.

*What if the slanderous words had an effect on the listeners and the person slandered suffered as a result. Must I tell him that it was I that spoke and beg his forgiveness?*

The problem with this case is that the person in question will be very hurt when told by you that it was you who slandered him and in all probability he will bear a grudge against you for a very long time. The *Chofetz Chaim* nevertheless says that because the fellow Jew was harmed, physically or monetarily, as a result of your slander, it is the same as any other sin that is committed between mankind and one must beg forgiveness from the victim before being able to repent.

However, HaGaon Rav Yisroel Salanter ztz"l said<sup>2</sup> that one does not have the right to upset a fellow Jew in order to attain his *mechila* (forgiveness) and therefore one

should approach him before Yom Kippur and say that if I harmed you in any way I beg your forgiveness and since it is customary to do that before Yom Kippur one will not hurt his feelings.<sup>3</sup>

*Is there reason to do וידוי (confession) after the final meal before the onset of Yom Kippur?*

The *Shulchan Aruch* says<sup>4</sup> that one must perform וידוי before the final meal lest<sup>5</sup> something happens during the meal and one will be prevented from performing the וידוי before Yom Kippur. The *Mishna Berura* adds that the *Ramban* holds that one should perform וידוי after the meal as well, right before Yom Kippur, and it is correct to be stringent and follow this opinion. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* explains the following: the idea behind this opinion is to do *t'shuva* as close as possible to the time when atonement begins (Yom Kippur), and thus to leave as little time as possible for sin before the commencing of atonement. The *Mishna Berura* says that this confession is accomplished by reciting the "Zakeh" at that time. It so happens though that one might be preoccupied right before sunset and thus one will miss this opportunity. Rav Sternbuch then suggests that one rise (וידוי)

<sup>1</sup> ספר חפץ חיים כלל ד' סעי' ב'.

<sup>2</sup> HaRav Sternbuch *shlita* heard from Harav Dessler ztz"l, see *Moadim Uzmanim* 1<sup>st</sup> chelek simon 54.

<sup>3</sup> Rav Sternbuch adds that if possible one must mention that one sinned against him and one begs his forgiveness because otherwise his atonement will be lacking. It should be done though in such a way that his friend will not be hurt.

<sup>4</sup> *Simon* 607:1.

<sup>5</sup> *M"b simon* 607:1, see *Sha'ar Hatsiun* 1.

must be recited standing) and say “אנא ה', חטאתי עויתי ופשעתי לפניך, ואני בוש מחטאי” (this sentence is the essence of וידוי).<sup>6</sup> In such a manner it is possible to perform the וידוי before sunset and *b'ezras Hashem* be worthy of the atonement granted on Yom Kippur.

*When does Yom Kippur actually begin?*

Our custom is to recite the *Birkas Shehecheyanu* before sunset and thus bring upon ourselves the *kedusha* (holiness) of Yom Kippur. From that point on one may not drink, eat or do any of the actions that are prohibited on Yom Kippur. Accordingly, women who recite the *Birkas Shehecheyanu* when lighting candles accept upon themselves all of the *halachos* that apply to Yom Kippur and they should remove their leather shoes before reciting this *b'racha*.<sup>7</sup>

*What if a woman wants to drive to shul (before sunset, obviously) before Yom Kippur after lighting the candles?*

When necessary, she may light candles without reciting the *Shehecheyanu* and stipulate that she is not accepting the Yom Tov until later, which would enable her to drive to shul even after having lit candles. This “stipulation” should not be used lightly because it is a *machlokes*<sup>8</sup> whether a stipulation can be made after lighting and the *halacha* is that it may only be used when necessary.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See the English machzorim for the translation.

<sup>7</sup> Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ztz"l* is of the opinion that she is bound by all the laws of Yom Kippur when she lights the candles even without reciting the *shehecheyanu*, *SS"K* 44 footnote 46.

<sup>8</sup> See *hilchos Shabbos* *simon* 263:10.

<sup>9</sup> *M"B* *simon* 263:44.

Yom Kippur

We are all concerned that until we do total *teshuva* we are not worthy and not really accepted and as a result we (some of us, at least) resign and get nowhere knowing that total and utter *teshuva* is extremely difficult. It is not so. Rav Chaim Friedlander *ztz"l* tells us that *Hashem* wants us to take a **small** step in His direction and He will then help us reach the next step. And then we are to make another small step in His direction, and again He will assist us. We are encouraged to know that *Hashem* helps at every stage no matter how small and “insignificant” and He helps us with the next step. Try it. Even if one falls back and has to start again He is there to help us, especially now in these days of repentance.

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Food For Thought

*If, for example, there is treif food in the hospital, is one permitted to traverse the reshus harabim to bring kosher food or must the patient eat the treif food?*

*Some have the notion that the Shabbos may only be violated by people already dealing with the chilul Shabbos but others should refrain, is that true?*

*My neighbor knocks on my door on Friday night asking to borrow my car in order to take his wife to hospital. It is not an emergency but she must go. Must I give up my car, knowing that as a result the battery will die, or can I say to him that he should call the ambulance service?*

Answers coming next week.

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Wishing our readers a g'mar vachasima tova l'chol Beis Yisroel.

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**Note:** The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.