

## Mishnah Yoma 8:9

*In which we find out about the importance of Teshuva*

### A. Torah text on Teshuvah:

#### Devarim 30:11-14

*11. For this commandment which I command you this day, is not hidden from you, nor is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.*

#### Devarim 30:2

*וּשְׁבַתְּ עַד יְיָ-הוֹ-הֶ-אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-אֲנֹכִי מֵצִוְךָ הַיּוֹם וּבְנִיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:  
And [you] shall return to the Lord your God, and shall obey his voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart, and with all your soul;*

1. The **Ramban** says the commandment is to: \_\_\_\_\_  
and derives his support from it on an earlier passuk [devarim 30:2]:

2. What is the key word – Hebrew and English? \_\_\_\_\_

**Teshuvah is not normal (Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 54a):**

1. תניא:

\_\_\_\_\_ It is taught in a Baraitta \_\_\_\_\_

2. שבעה דברים נבראו קודם שנברא העולם,

\_\_\_\_\_

דבר = things, נבראו = ברא + past tense + 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural

3. ואלו הן: תורה, ותשובה, וגן עדן, וגיהנם, וכסא הכבוד, ובית המקדש, ושמו של משיח.

\_\_\_\_\_

ואלו הן = and these are them, כסא הכבוד = the throne of glory

3. What does it mean when the Talmud says that something is created before the world was created?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Steps to change – The Rambam Way

### Mishneh Torah – Hilchot Teshuva Halacha 2

מה היא התשובה--הוא שיעזב החוטא חטאו, ויסירונו ממחשבתו ויגמר בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד, שנאמר "יעזב רשע דרכו, ואיש און מחשבתיו" ([ישעיהו נה,ז](#)). וכו' יתנחם על שעבר, שנאמר "כי-אחרי שובי, נחמתי, ואחרי הודעי, ספקתי על-ידי" ([ירמיהו לא,יח](#)); ויעיד עליו יודע תעלומות שלא ישוב לזה החטא לעולם, שנאמר "ולא-נאמר עוד אלהינו, למעשה ידינו--אשר-בך, ירחם יתום" ([הושע יד,ד](#)). וצריך להתודות בשפתי, ולומר ענינות אלו שגמר בלבו.

What is repentance?

That the person should abandon his sins, remove them from his thoughts and resolve never to do it again. As it is written, "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, [and let him return to the L-rd]" (Yishayahu 55: 7).

He must also regret the past [sin], as it is written, "For after I had returned I regretted, and after becoming aware of my sin I slapped my thigh in anguish, [I was ashamed and also humiliated, for I bore the shame of my youth]" (Yirmiyahu 31: 18).

[He must reach a level of repentance that G-d,] the Knower of secrets, testifies [about him] that he will never return to that sin. As it is written, "we will no longer say, 'Our gods' to the work of our hands, for it is with You that an orphan finds mercy"(Hoshea 14: 4).

He also needs to confess aloud and say all these resolutions that he has made in his heart.

What are the steps to Teshuva?	On a scale of 1-10, how hard is this step? (1=easy, 10 = hard)

**Question to ponder: How could you use the Rambam's advice in your own life?**

**Extra Texts:****A piece of Aggada from Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zara, 17b**

Surely it has been taught: It was said of R. Eleazar b. Dordaya that he did not leave out any harlot in the world without coming to her.

Once, he heard that there was a certain prostitute in one of the towns by the sea who accepted a purse of coins for her hire. He took a purse of coins and crossed seven rivers for her sake. As he was with her, she blew forth breath and said: 'As this blown breath will not return to its place, so will Eleazar b. Dordaya never be received in repentance.'

He thereupon went, sat between two hills and mountains and exclaimed: 'O, ye hills and mountains, plead for mercy for me!' They replied: 'How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed!"

So he exclaimed: 'Heaven and earth, plead for mercy for me!' They, too, replied: How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, "For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment."

He then exclaimed: 'Sun and moon, plead for mercy for me!' But they also replied: 'How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, "Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed."

He exclaimed: 'Ye stars and constellations plead ye for mercy for me!' Said they: 'How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, "And all the hosts of heaven shall decay away."

Said he: The matter then depends upon me alone! He placed his head between his knees, he wept aloud until his soul departed.

Then a bat-kol [heavenly voice] was heard proclaiming: 'Rabbi Eleazar b. Dordaya is destined for the life of the world to come!' .....

.....Rabbi [Yehuda Hanassi] [on hearing of it] wept and said: One may acquire eternal life after many years, another in one hour! Rabbi also said: Not only are penitents accepted, they are even called 'Rabbi'!

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the 'blown breath' the prostitute refers to?
2. Why does what the harlot says effect Rabbi Eleazar ben Dordaya so much?
3. Why does he consult the hills, mountains, heaven, earth, sun, moon, and constellations? What do we learn

from this?

4. What happened when 'he placed his head between his knees, he wept aloud until his soul departed.'?
5. Why would the Bat Kol (heavenly voice) have said he would be invited into the world to come.
6. Why was he given the title Rabbi?
7. Why was Rabbi Yehudah HaNassi so upset?
8. What could the Bat Kol (heavenly voice) have said in reply to Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi?
9. Do you agree with the Bat Kol (heavenly voice)?
10. What is the message of this story?

## **Teshuva – and the 12 step programme**

The Twelve Steps, originated by [Alcoholics Anonymous](#), is the spiritual foundation for personal recovery from the effects of alcoholism, not only for the alcoholic, but also for their friends and family in [Al-Anon Family Groups](#).

Many members of 12-step recovery programs have found that these steps were not merely a way to [stop drinking](#), but they became a guide toward a [new way of life](#)<sup>4</sup>.

These are the original Twelve Steps as published by Alcoholics Anonymous:[10]

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

From [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

### **Step 3**

#### **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

Many members of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) and [Al-Anon Family Groups](#) and other 12-step programs find a new way of life by "working" the spiritual program found within the steps.

Although that journey begins when they first walk into the rooms, real recovery begins when a decision is made to "let go" of living their lives their way, and turning it over to a power greater than themselves.

Many of us who have found recovery through the 12 steps, are amazed to find that as soon as we sincerely take that Step 3, a loving God as we understand Him does actually begin to "care for our lives" in miraculous ways. The key to releasing that power is found in the previous step -- believing that it can and will happen.

The only requirement to change from living a life outside of God's will to one that is guided by the will of God, and place our lives in the hands of a higher power is a simple decision to allow it to happen!