Righting Wrongs: A Practical Approach to Repentance

*Source Sheet by* [*Michael Washerstein*](https://www.sefaria.org/profile/michael-washerstein)

*Based on* [*a sheet*](https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/78854) *by* [*Sam Blumberg*](https://www.sefaria.org/profile/sam-blumberg)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:6**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.6)

|  |
| --- |
| Even though *teshuva* [repentance] and shouting out [to G-d] are always good, in the ten days that are between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* those things are even better and are accepted [by G-d] immediately. |

 | [**משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה ב׳:ו׳**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.6)

|  |
| --- |
| אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהַתְּשׁוּבָה וְהַצְּעָקָה יָפָה לָעוֹלָם. בַּעֲשָׂרָה הַיָּמִים שֶׁבֵּין רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וְיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הִיא יָפָה בְּיוֹתֵר וּמִתְקַבֶּלֶת הִיא מִיָּד. |

 |

A. When can *teshuva* be done?

B. When is the best time to do *teshuva*?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Mishneh Torah, Repentance 1:1**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.1.1)

|  |
| --- |
| All commandments of the Torah, whether they be positive [do this!] or negative [don't do this!]-- if a person transgresses any one of them, either on purpose or accidentally, when a person does *teshuva* [repentance] and returns from his or her sin, he or she must confess verbally before G-d...How is the verbal confession made? A person says: "Please, G-d! I have sinned; I have been obstinate; I have trespassed against You, in doing this and that. Now, behold! I have repented and am ashamed of my actions; I'm never going to do it again." This is the essence of the confession, but anyone who elaborates in confessing and goes on and on is, indeed, praiseworthy. |

 | [**משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה א׳:א׳**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.1.1)

|  |
| --- |
| כָּל מִצְוֹת שֶׁבַּתּוֹרָה בֵּין עֲשֵׂה בֵּין לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה אִם עָבַר אָדָם עַל אַחַת מֵהֶן בֵּין בְּזָדוֹן בֵּין בִּשְׁגָגָה כְּשֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה וְיָשׁוּב מֵחֶטְאוֹ חַיָּב לְהִתְוַדּוֹת לִפְנֵי הָאֵל...כֵּיצַד מִתְוַדִּין. אוֹמֵר אָנָּא הַשֵּׁם חָטָאתִי עָוִיתִי פָּשַׁעְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְעָשִׂיתִי כָּךְ וְכָךְ וַהֲרֵי נִחַמְתִּי וּבֹשְׁתִּי בְּמַעֲשַׂי וּלְעוֹלָם אֵינִי חוֹזֵר לְדָבָר זֶה. וְזֶהוּ עִקָּרוֹ שֶׁל וִדּוּי. וְכָל הַמַּרְבֶּה לְהִתְוַדּוֹת וּמַאֲרִיךְ בְּעִנְיָן זֶה הֲרֵי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח.  |

 |

A. What are the steps of *teshuva* according to the Rambam?

B. What do you think is the significance of a verbal confession? In other words, why does the Rambam specify that the confession be said out loud?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:9**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.9)

|  |
| --- |
| *Teshuva* [repentance] and *Yom Kippur* only atone for sins that are between a person and G-d... but sins that are between a person and his or her friend, such as: hurting a friend, or cursing at a friend, or stealing and so on and so forth-- a person is not atoned until he or she gives the friend what he or she owes to the friend and appeases them. |

 | [**משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה ב׳:ט׳**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.9)

|  |
| --- |
| אֵין הַתְּשׁוּבָה וְלֹא יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים מְכַפְּרִין אֶלָּא עַל עֲבֵרוֹת שֶׁבֵּין אָדָם לַמָּקוֹם... אֲבָל עֲבֵרוֹת שֶׁבֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ כְּגוֹן הַחוֹבֵל אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ אוֹ הַמְקַלֵּל חֲבֵרוֹ אוֹ גּוֹזְלוֹ וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶן אֵינוֹ נִמְחַל לוֹ לְעוֹלָם עַד שֶׁיִּתֵּן לַחֲבֵרוֹ מַה שֶּׁהוּא חַיָּב לוֹ וִירַצֵּהוּ. |

 |

A. What is the difference between sins that are between a person and G-d and those that are between a person and his or her friend?

B. What is the significance of the phrase "and appeases them"? In other words, why isn't it enough just to pay my friend back if I owe them money?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Mishnah Yoma 8:9**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Yoma.8.9)

|  |
| --- |
| One who says, "I will sin and then repent, I will sin and then repent," does not receive an opportunity to repent. [One who says] "I will sin, and *Yom Kippur* will atone," *Yom Kippur* will not atone. |

 | [**משנה יומא ח׳:ט׳**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Yoma.8.9)

|  |
| --- |
| הָאוֹמֵר, אֶחֱטָא וְאָשׁוּב, אֶחֱטָא וְאָשׁוּב, אֵין מַסְפִּיקִין בְּיָדוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה. אֶחֱטָא וְיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים מְכַפֵּר, אֵין יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים מְכַפֵּר. |

 |

A. What does this text teach us about the concept of sin and repentance in Judaism?

B. What does this text teach us about *Yom Kippur*?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Mishneh Torah, Repentance 2:1**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.1)

|  |
| --- |
| What is complete repentance? One who once more had in it in his or her power to repeat a transgression, but separated him or herself from it, and did not do it because of repentance-- not out of fear or lack of strength. |

 | [**משנה תורה, הלכות תשובה ב׳:א׳**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishneh_Torah%2C_Repentance.2.1)

|  |
| --- |
| אֵי זוֹ הִיא תְּשׁוּבָה גְּמוּרָה. זֶה שֶׁבָּא לְיָדוֹ דָּבָר שֶׁעָבַר בּוֹ וְאֶפְשָׁר בְּיָדוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ וּפֵרַשׁ וְלֹא עָשָׂה מִפְּנֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה. לֹא מִיִּרְאָה וְלֹא מִכִּשְׁלוֹן כֹּחַ. |

 |

A. What is so "complete" about "complete repentance"?

B. How are you going to make this Yom Kippur a more meaningful experience for yourself?