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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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Desiring Repentance

During this time of year, we pay closer attention to the Shmoneh Esrei especially the *brachah* regarding teshuvah. It concludes with the words, "He Who desires repentance." (הרוצה בתשובה)

The *Yismach Yisrael* raises a compelling question: Wouldn't it make more sense to say, "He Who *accepts* repentance." (המתרצה בתשובה) After all, that's what we want! Not just that Hashem "wants" us to repent, but that He actually accepts our repentance, erases the past, and forgives us. So why do we emphasize His desire rather than His acceptance? What deeper meaning lies in this phrasing?

We know that not everyone is obligated in all 613 commandments. Some apply only to men, others to kohanim, kings, farmers, or those living in Eretz Yisrael. The mitzvah of teshuvah is unique, it only applies to someone who has transgressed. A person born righteous, who remains so, will never be obligated to fulfill this mitzvah.

The *Yismach Yisrael* uses this idea to explain how the Gemara (*Berachos* 34b) can state that the "repentant person stands in a place that even the perfectly righteous person cannot stand." He explains that this is because the perfectly righteous

person is always going to have fulfilled one less mitzvah than the repentant person – the mitzvah of repentance. The extra mitzvah fulfilled by the repentant person helps him reach a higher spiritual level than the tzadik.

In other words, a transgression followed by sincere repentance becomes a catalyst for profound spiritual ascent that would have been impossible without the initial fall.

NOT FORGOTTEN

More so, the Rambam (*Teshuvah* 7:6) writes that the repentant person is not just accepted, but desired, close and dear to Hashem.

This is different than one who wrongs his friend and then appeases him, because usually the one who forgives makes it as if the wrong never occurred. The victim forgets about the crime of the past as if it never occurred. However, this is not how Hashem views the repentant person and his transgressions. Hashem doesn't forgive the person and pretend that it never happened. On the contrary, Hashem remembers — and He cherishes the growth that came because of it. He understands that because of the transgression there is a potential for greater heights that was seized

R' Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchak Danciger

(1853–erev Rosh Chodesh Shevat 1910), was the second rebbi of Aleksander *chassidus*. The *Yismach Yisrael* once went to Reb Yaakov Aryeh of Radzymin for a *brachah* for children. After he left, he said it's a wonder that he's asking for children "he has the *neshamah* of the Ohr Hachaim." On another occasion Reb Yaakov Ayreh said he will be מילדי העברים, meaning he will give birth to Jewish children, not physically bearing Jewish children, but spiritually nurturing them by bringing them closer to Hashem. After he passed away, the *sefer Yismach Yisrael* - The fundamental text of Aleksander ideology, was compiled by his successor and brother Reb Shmuel Zvi, from his own writings and of those of the *chassidim*, creating an everlasting memory to his name. It includes many thoughts from their father, the first Rebbe Reb Yechiel.

Rav God'l Eisner was born in Lodz (24 Shevat 1903 – 24 Adar 1985) into a Gerer family. He was proud of the fact that he knew and absorbed from people who knew the Chidushei Harim and the Kotzker. He lived in that world of Torah and *emes*, giving shiurim based on the Sfas Emes. When asked him how to develop a path in chasidus, he would repeat several times, “Gemara, Rashi Tosafos.” He demanded of himself and then demanded more. A lot of his writings are about self-awareness. He observed involuntary reflexes in himself and others, using them as tools for character development.

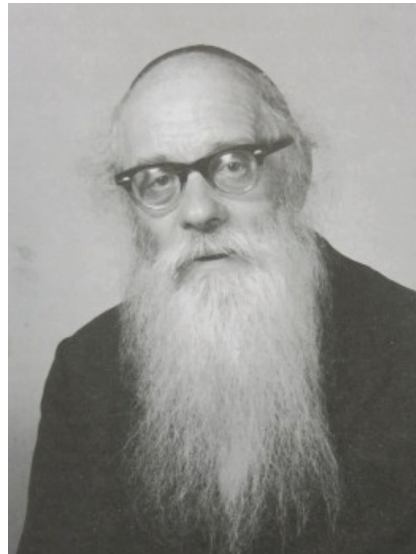
Before the age of 20, he married, Miriam, the daughter of Rav Eliyahu Cooper, a prominent Gerer *chasid* from Lodz, and continued his avodah, learning from morning till night. When Miriam fell ill, Rav God'l cared for their only child, a daughter, Machla Reina, while living in a room in his in-laws home. He became a *melamed* in a “modernish” yeshiva, and was extremely successful imbuing in his students a fire for Yiddishkeit.

His journeys to his Rebbe, the Imrei Emes, began as a child. Later, he would organize his own groups. He said, “Simply upon arriving to Ger, and seeing the chasidim going in and out, the entire trip was already worthwhile. Everything after that was pure profit.”

When the war broke out, their ability to acquire meds for his wife became limited, and she soon passed away, in the Lodz ghetto. His parents and siblings died in the Lodz ghetto, and his daughter would be taken *al Kiddush Hashem* elsewhere Hy”d.

Throughout the years in the ghetto and labor camps, he strengthened those around him through emunah, sharp wit, and joy. He had three rules to survive, “Never lose yourself; always have a sense of humor and if possible be a little mischievous.”

He related that once when he was exhausted after a 14-mile death march, he thought the end was near and nearly gave up until he heard from behind him a boy scream, “God'l run,” and this motivated him to live another day. He learned from this how one should never underestimate his inner fortitude and how an encouraging word can revive another. Emerging from this *gehinom*, he returned to Lodz for five years, helping others reconnect with Judaism. He later moved to Paris, and eventually to Eretz Yisrael, where he served as a *mashgiach* for over 30 years. After the passing of his second wife Miriam Naperstak, he married her sister, Chana Perel.



by the repentant person and that is why the repentant person is desired and close and dear to Hashem. This is because he’s in the location that one who never sinned could never achieve.

This closeness is hinted at with the words “He Who desires repentance.” (הרוצה בתשובה) The Yismach Yisrael notes that had the *brachah* stated, “He Who accepts

repentance.” (המתרצה בתשובה),” it would’ve been understood that Hashem accepts our repentance and acts as if the transgression never happened at all. We start with a clean slate. The “desiring” of our repentance is a reminder to a greater level of closeness to Hashem that is now occurring. It’s not about erasing the past but realizing how repentance helps us become even closer with Him.



ZERA EMES PROJECT UPDATE

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTNER IN THE NEXT ZERA EMES SEFER

We are thrilled to share that the next volume in the Zera Emes Series is entering its final stages. This new sefer, iy”H, will explore the mitzvos of Pru Urvu and marriage, a known *segulah* to fulfill these mitzvos, and will be a companion to the Fisher Family Legacy Haggadah.

Kesivah Vachasimah Tova!

Lip Service

As we enter the season of introspection, we naturally focus on the importance of teshuvah. But true repentance is not merely about lip service, fulfilled by simply confessing our sins.

Rav God'l Eisner offered a *mashal* when discussing the idea of being honest and not just offering “lip service.”

A Jewish traveler once stopped at a hotel during the month of Elul. As he tried to sleep, he heard the guest in the adjacent room moaning and crying, repeatedly chanting the word “Elul.” It wasn’t the noise that kept him awake, it was the raw emotion. As the neighbor was up the entire night chanting “Elul”, the traveler was as well. The traveler, deeply moved by what he assumed was a hidden tazdik, resolved to improve his ways. The next morning, curious and inspired, he approached the “Elul Jew” at breakfast,

eager to learn the secret behind such spiritual intensity. He wanted to learn from the guest his methods of reaching such spirituality. “What was your secret? What was behind your Elul cries?” The neighbor replied, “Normally, when Elul arrives, the weather cools and the bugs disappear. But last night, they wouldn’t leave me alone. They kept biting me, even though summer was over and it was already Elul. I kept shouting at them ‘It’s Elul already!’ hoping they’d stop bothering me.”

Rav Gad'l’s shmooze awakens us that it is time to repent and not just say the word “Elul,” even with emotion. Even the mitzvos that we are performing (blowing shofar etc...) we have to know that although we receive credit when we fulfill them, but they are meant to inspire us to repent and that we too should not have our mitzvos like the chant of the person in the hotel —loud, passionate, but ultimately misdirected..

Genius in Kindness - A Story

After WWII, while in Paris, Rav God'l was with Rav Itche Leizer z"l.

There with them was another respectable Jew. They knew that he was destitute and they decided to help him. They already helped others find jobs, but that was easier because most people took any type of job they could find. This respectable Jew refused to take any type of menial job.

They discovered a shul on the outskirts of the city seeking a janitor and submitted the man’s resume, adding that he was knowledgeable in Torah and would offer shiurim for free. The shul agreed. They told the man he had been hired as a rav, omitting the janitorial details. He was thrilled and sat proudly on the mizrach side each day, while Rav God'l and Rav Itche woke early to clean and prepare the shul. The “rav” received his salary and gave daily lessons, though the congregants spoke French and he spoke Yiddish. One day, the shul hosted an event and asked the man to help rearrange the space. Unable to communicate, they turned to Rav God'l to interpret. He relayed the event details but left out the setup request, quietly handling it himself. This continued for two years until Rav God'l and the “rav” made aliyah to Eretz Yisrael.

Shofar Acronym

Rav Yaakov ben Asher (the son of the Rosh), actually authored two foundational works that remain central to Torah study today. The first is the Tur, a structured *halachic* code divided into four sections, which later served as the basis for Rav Yosef Cairo's Shulchan Aruch. The second is his commentary on Chumash, filled with cryptic allusions, gematrios, and roshei teivos, often drawing connections between seemingly unrelated *pessukim*.

Rarely is that style cited in the Tur. However, regarding the power of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah he breaks from his normal approach in his *halachic* work. The Tur (*O. C.* 585) cites that when the shofar is blown the yetzer hara is weakened, and the *remez* for this can be found in the acronym of shofar which spells out, "there is no Satan or harm. אין שטן ואין פגע רע ראשי תיבות שופר פי' כשיש שופר אין פגע רע. This is probably based on a *passuk* (*Melachim* 1 5:18).

THE FOUR-LETTER WORD SHOFAR

The Taz asks that the word shofar has four letters to it and the phrase in Hebrew, "there is no Satan or harm," is 5 words (אין שטן ואין פגע רע), and therefore the first letter of the first word does not fit neatly into the acronym. The first word is, "there is no," (אין). Without this first word, the acronym is more accurately translated, "there *is* a Satan and no harm," which seems to be close to the opposite of what the Tur implies!

The Taz answers that this is referring to the idea that Satan is actually there, but he becomes transformed into a defending Angel instead of a prosecuting Angel. On Rosh Hashanah, through the mitzvah of

shofar, the Satan becomes a defending angel instead of a prosecuting one.

The *Lekutei Chaver ben Chaim* (Volume 2, end of page 35:4) quotes the Taz and wonders: Satan has no power on only one day a year. That day is Yom Kippur, when no shofar is actually blown. So how can the Taz say the acronym of shofar proves that the Shofar causes the Satan to become a defender, if that transformation happens only on Yom Kipper – a day when the shofar isn't used?

SHOFAR POWER

It must be that there is a difference to the powerlessness of the Satan between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur the Satan has no power as the Gemara (*Yoma* 20a) states that the gematria of "the Satan והשטן" is 364, to show that the Satan's power only exists for 364 days of the (sun) year. The Satan has no permission to prosecute on one day of the year which is Yom Kippur. That is why there is no mitzvah requirement to blow shofar on Yom Kippur, because there is no need to push away the Satan. The *Pirkei D'R Eliezer* (46) Ads that not only does he not have any power to prosecute but he actually becomes a defender. He tells Hashem, "today Your people are like the angels; they go without shoes, they do not eat or drink, they stand on their feet praising You, they are at peace with each other and they are free of sin." This testimony prompts Hashem to forgive us.

Rosh Hashanah is different, because on Rosh Hashanah the Satan *has* power to be a prosecutor. However, through the power of our fulfilling the mitzvah of blowing the shofar, we create that the Satan becomes neutralized.

ר' חזקיה פייבל פלויט

R' Chizkiyahu Feivel Plaut (24 Shevat 1817 – 26 Kislev 1894) was a student of the Chasam Sofer and eventually Rav of Shurin for fifty years where he opened a yeshivah. Starting from 1878 he published eleven *sefarim* on many topics. Many of his contemporaries quote him, including the Maharam Shick, R' Yehudah Assad, and the Ksav Sofer. He writes, "With His kindness, I have reached old age, but I have not merited to have children. Therefore, I decided to give my parents an eternal name among the Jewish people by writing this *sefer*." He explains that since the entire idea of publishing a *sefer* was for his parents' sake, he decided to name it after them as well.