

How to do Teshuva

I came across from Rav Satka's weekly sheet on the פרשה, [Rav Satka being from the בית מדרש טוב here in Kew Gardens Hills] A handyman's guide to doing תשובה. He says these are the easiest things to do and they are guaranteed to bring us a כפרה. They are brought down from a ספר called ציפורן שמיר, which I translate loosely as the fingernail of the שמיר, which is the little worm that could that could break stones. This is a very good thing for everyone to have, so I wanted to quote it here:

1. What's a good way to do תשובה? Say אמן יהא שמיה רבא with all your concentration that you can, and putting your whole heart into it. Even if you had major עבירות, it's as if he was from דור אנוש and they are מוחל to him. It's a גמרא in שבת.
2. Anyone who is וותרן על מידותיו, וותרן, to look away and let the other person succeed, let them win. It's not good to always be right. No one ever got ahead in life by always being right. Let you say, you're right. A very good מידה I learned from my father עליו השלום, and he repeats it over here to be מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו. And that's a גמרא in יומא. And what is his reward? פשעים, which are bigger than עבירות. They're מוחל him all of his פשעים, which are bigger than עבירות.
3. If somebody sits and pays attention during a שיעור, and after the שיעור, when they're saying the קדיש דרבנן and he says אמן יהא שמיה רבא, they're מכפר him on all of his עבירות. It's a ספר משלי.
4. Whoever says שירת הים in davening with great joy and שמחה, as if he himself was crossing the ים and is watching פרעה and his and his army drowning in the ים, they'll be מכפר on his עבירות. It's brought down in משנה ברורה.
5. If someone is sick and someone is crying for him and davens for him, they are מוחל his עבירות, as brought down in גמרא שבת.
6. Whoever davens on Friday night and he says ויכולו, the two מלאכים that come along with him from home, from shul, tell him וְנָסַר עֲוֹנָךְ וְחָטְאֶתָּךְ תִּכָּפֵּר, it's a גמרא in שבת.
7. If a person has חס ושלום - ייסורים - we all once in a while have some difficulties in life, and we always ask "Why me?" If instead of asking why me, we say we're מקבל them באהבה, we'll live a long life. ייסורים are ממרק עוונותיו של אדם, it's a גמרא in ברכות.
8. Whoever is עוסק בתורה לשמה, when you learn, learn לשמה. Sometimes we learn just to be interested in it. Sometimes we learn just so we can show. If a person learns לשמה, all of his עבירות are מתכפר, it's a גמרא in ברכות.
9. Putting on תפילין and having the proper כוונות are מוחל a person on his עבירות.
10. If anybody davened שחרית on יום כיפור, and especially if he reads the פרשה of אחרי מות and he cries over the sons of אהרן הכהן, הקדוש ברוך הוא, אהרן הכהן will be מכפר him on all of his עבירות.
11. Last but not least, ספר תהילים, the all-time, always favorite way for a person to do תשובה, to say תהילים and to ask Hashem please be מכפר my עבירות.

If he does all of these לשם שמיים, he will have tremendous כבוד from הקדוש ברוך הוא, and his heart will understand, and בעזרת השם, he'll make a נחת רוח before הקדוש ברוך הוא.

What a fantastic little review and guide for this difficult thing that we call תשובה, which people really don't know how to do. They think that when they're yelling out during סליחות, that that's doing תשובה. That's not doing תשובה. תשובה is changing ourselves for the better. These are all little things that we usually do, they're not hard things. We just have to have in mind that we want to have our עבירות to be erased and to be cleansed. בעזרת השם, we should have a גיט געבענטשט יאר and a כתיבה וחתומה טובה.

