

Famous teaching:

Deut 30:11-14:

11: Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. 12: It is not in the heavens, that you should say, “Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” 13: Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” 14: No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.

Is “the instruction” all of Torah? Or is it teshuvah?

Sforno: and the reason that I said in verse 1 that the repentance must be wholehearted and among the nations, i.e. while you are still in exile, is so that it can trigger your salvation. For, indeed this commandment, i.e. the one to return to G'd in sincere penitence **אשר אנכי מצוך היום**, Moses reminds the people that in the list of sacrifices in [Leviticus 5,5](#) et al, where various kinds of sin and guilt offerings are listed as means to expiate for the error committed, the essential refrain is always “**והתוודה אשר חטא**,” that the guilty person first confesses his mistake, his sin, even the one committed inadvertently.

Shai Held: But an array of traditional commentators insists that these verses are continuous with the ones that immediately precede them. Since those verses dealt with the charge to repent, so, too, do these.⁷ Nahmanides (Ramban, 1194-1270), for example, avers that God wants Israel to remember that even in the very depths of exile, teshuvah is “not too hard, not far off from you, but is rather ‘very close to you,’ such that you can do it at any time and in any place” (Commentary to Deuteronomy 30:11). In a similar vein, R. Joseph Albo (1380-1444) argues that our verses point to “the importance of [teshuvah] and the ease with which it may be done” (Sefer Ha-Ikkarim, IV: 25).

In Deuteronomy’s words, the key to repentance “is not in the heavens,” nor is it “beyond the sea.” Where is it? It is “very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart.” To repent, in other words, is to turn inward. But crucially, turning inward is not the final goal; on the contrary, we turn inward so that we may again—and more deeply—turn outward, to God and to one another.

Ben Tzion Shafier on JewishPress.com, Teshuvah is Easy, Change is Difficult: If I have had words with relatives or friends, it's not enough to ask forgiveness. That takes care of the actual sin but the repair of the relationship still has to be done. And certainly in terms of the way that we treat our spouses, while we will ask forgiveness, and can expect it to be granted, the real work is looking forward and asking ourselves, "What can I do to make my marriage better?"

Teshuvah can eliminate the sin and make it as if it never happened, but it can't make up for the lost opportunity. That can only happen with a course correction, accomplished with careful analysis of how we spend our time and asking ourselves the critical question: Am I happy with the direction of my life?

Rabbi Abraham Twerski, Expert on addiction: Changing one's character traits is a major challenge and is usually met with great resistance. Many times real change won't happen until one realizes that unless one does so, his life is meaningless.

Uncompromised honesty is necessary to see through the psychological defenses that are a barrier to teshuvah. Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Penitence and Yom Kippur are days in which one should be inspired to evaluate the meaning of one's life. Only when we are aware that we need "fixing" will we do teshuvah.

SO what does teshuvah mean to you? What is easy about it? What is difficult about it?