

Netivot Shalom, Parashat Nitzavim (Parashat HaTeshuvah), Siman 1

Why is it necessary to say blessing? For it is well understood that curse will cause the Jew to repent, but how does blessing bring one to repent?

Shabbat 118b

With regard to anyone who observes Shabbat in accordance with its *halakhot*, even if he worships idolatry as in the generation of Enosh, God forgives him his sins, as it is stated: "Fortunate is the man [enosh] who does this and the person who holds strong to it, one who guards the Shabbat from desecrating it [*mehallelo*], and guards his hand from doing any evil."

Ohr HaChaim on Deuteronomy 30:6

Concerning the failure to keep the negative commandments the Torah says: "and G'd will circumcise your hearts." We are familiar with the concept that the foreskin of the heart is a hyperbole for doing what is forbidden and a love for the forbidden. G'd now says ה' את לאהבה "in order to love the Lord your G'd." In response to the Israelites learning to love G'd, He in turn, will take care of all our troubles. He will deliver our enemies into our hands and He will afflict all our enemies with the curses mentioned previously.

Rambam, Hilchot Tehsuvah 7:6

Great, indeed, is repentance for it brings man nigh to the Shekinah, even as it is said: "Return, O Israel, unto the Lord thy God" ([Hosea, 14. 2](#)); and it is further said: "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord" ([Amos, 4.6](#)); and it is yet again said: "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, yea, return unto Me" ([Jer. 4.1](#)), as if saying: "If thou wilt turn in repentance ye will cleave unto Me". Repentance brings near the far apart

Bavli Yoma 86b

Reish Lakish said: Great is repentance, as the penitent's intentional sins are counted for him as unwitting transgressions, as it is stated: "Return, Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your iniquity" ([Hosea 14:2](#)). The Gemara analyzes this: Doesn't "iniquity" mean an intentional sin? Yet the prophet calls it stumbling, implying that one who repents is considered as though he only stumbled accidentally in his transgression. The Gemara asks: Is that so? Didn't Reish Lakish himself say: Great is repentance, as one's intentional sins are counted for him as merits, as it is stated: "And when the wicked turns from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby" ([Ezekiel 33:19](#)), and all his deeds, even his transgressions, will become praiseworthy? The Gemara reconciles: This is not difficult: Here, when one repents out of love, his sins become like merits; there, when one repents out of fear, his sins are counted as unwitting transgressions.

