

Some Words from the Rosh Yeshiva

The Rambam opens his Hilchos Teshuvah with the laws of Vidui – verbal confession – stating that anyone who violates one of the Mitzvos of the Torah is obligated to say Vidui when he repents. (It is noteworthy that Rambam does not consider Teshuvah itself to be a Mitzvah; only the Vidui which concludes the Teshuvah process is counted as one of the 613 commandments.) In the Rambam’s formulation, the Vidui is more than an admission of guilt. The Vidui must also contain an expression of regret (Charata) and an expression of resolve not to repeat the sin (Kabbala L’haba). In other words, Vidui is a verbalization of the entire Teshuvah process.

Why is this necessary? Why must Teshuvah be put into words? Why can’t Teshuvah simply be a state of mind?

One possibility is that words are more firm than mere thoughts which are often vague and cloudy. Putting the Teshuvah steps into words makes the repentance solid.

There may be however another idea behind this mandated verbalization:

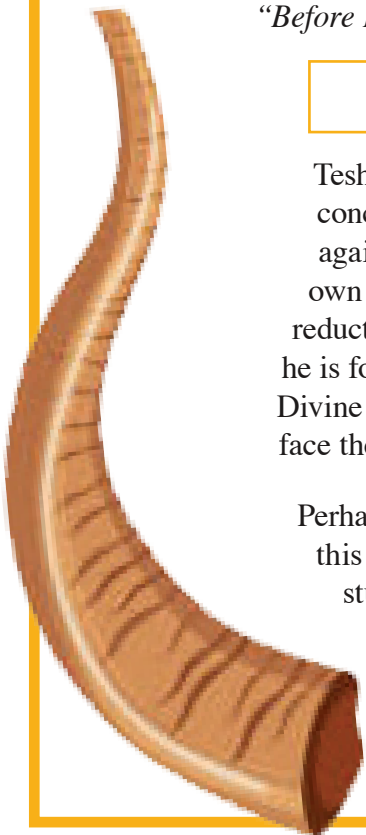
The Rambam writes that the Vidui must be said “*Before Hashem*”. To put it differently, in Vidui we are communicating with Hashem. (Perhaps it is for this reason that on Yom Kippur the Vidui is inserted into the silent Amidah. Prayer too, as the Rambam explains in Hilchos Tefillah, must be said “*Before Hashem*”.

While engaged in the one, we are in the necessary state of mind for the other.)

Teshuvah without Vidui can cut Hashem out of the picture entirely. You see, the very concept of sin can be understood without reference to a Supreme Being. A person can sin against himself by contravening his most deeply held principles or by failing to achieve his own potential. Teshuvah then would just be another form of self-improvement akin to stress reduction, time management, or goal-setting. By requiring that the penitent speak to Hashem, he is forced to acknowledge that sin is first and foremost a violation of a relationship with the Divine Other. A damaged relationship cannot be repaired unilaterally; the guilty party must face the other and speak words of apology and appeasement. This is the meaning of Vidui.

Perhaps this explains the apparent redundancy in the opening line of the special Haftarah for this Shabbos Shuva (Hoshea 14:2-3), “Return, Israel, to Hashem, your Lord, for you have stumbled in your sins. Take for yourself words and return to Hashem...”

Why is the admonition to return repeated?



The initial return refers to the process of Teshuvah; regret for the past and resolve for the future themselves constitute a return to Hashem in the sense that the person has returned to compliance with the Divine Command. The “taking of words” is a reference to the words of Vidui (see Shaarei Teshuvah, Part 1 on his discussion of the Fifteenth Fundamental of Teshuvah). This is a return of a different kind. Here the penitent returns to face Hashem in addressing the words of Vidui to Him.



In the Hebrew, the two “returns” are expressed differently. The first is “*Ad Hashem*”; the second is “*El Hashem*”. While both “*Ad*” and “*El*” are translated as “to”, there is a subtle difference in connotation. By way of illustration: A person traveling to a border but not crossing can be said to have traveled “to” the border. Here the Hebrew “*Ad*” would be more appropriately used in the sense of “up to”. A person traveling to New York and entering the city would be said to have traveled “*El*”. Thus, in speaking of the approach of one person to another – or to Hashem – “*El*” would imply a greater closeness than “*Ad*”.

It is only in Vidui that this higher level is attained.

Chag Same’ach!





Alumni Spotlight: Arieh Goldman (2016)

Thank you so much for taking the time to be interviewed. To start off, what years were you in Darchei?

Of course! I was in Darchei from 2012 until 2016.

Do you have any funny stories or memorable experiences from those years that you'd like to share?

I have plenty that I probably shouldn't share, but one story in particular stands out. One of my most fond memories in my years at Darchei was actually in Camp Stern, which I'm sure most guys would consider an extension of Darchei. Rabbi Stern brought a bottle for the guys who ran the ATV/Dirt biking company that took us out. He did this as a thank you and to make sure they were happy with us, helping them overlook any issues the guys may cause. I've always taken this to heart and learnt from here that in the real world you gotta know who you're dealing with and put in the extra effort to make sure you can succeed.

Let's talk about life after Darchei. Which yeshivas and universities did you attend?

I went to Senters for yeshiva, and afterward, I attended TTEC and SUNY.

How did your time at Darchei compare to or prepare you for those experiences?

Nothing will ever be quite like Darchei. That's something I've heard across the board, and I have yet to meet anyone who feels differently. In terms of preparation, the atmosphere at Darchei is incredibly supportive.

It teaches you to put yourself out there, make good friends, and keep them close. That lesson applies not just to yeshiva or university, but to everything you do—whether it's work, kollel, or wherever life takes you.

Absolutely. So, what are you up to now, and how has that lesson helped you in your current endeavors?

Currently, along with fellow Darchei alumnus Aviel Shiff, I have co-founded a marketing company called Nada Essentials. We are revolutionizing the way the world approaches marketing, with a focus on students—a key demographic both from a marketing and a charitable perspective, as they often need access to free essentials.

Nada Essentials transforms everyday products into portable billboards that end up in the consumer's home. We produce and distribute toiletries, phone chargers, water bottles, and other daily necessities, white-labeling these items and their packaging with branding and advertisements for our clients. These products are distributed in student-centric areas through our custom-built smart vending machines, which are controlled by our in-house app.

Advertisers benefit from the prime locations and high demand, giving them a low CPM and a high return on impressions for their investment. Additionally, we promote our partners directly on the vending machines using large display screens, providing them with even more exposure. This model allows us to supply students with essential goods while delivering significant reach and impressions for our partners.

That's so cool! Have you been able to partner with any notable companies so far?

Definitely! You can follow our progress live on our LinkedIn page, but as of now, we've partnered with companies like B&H, Crawler, Speechify, and the American Dream Mall.

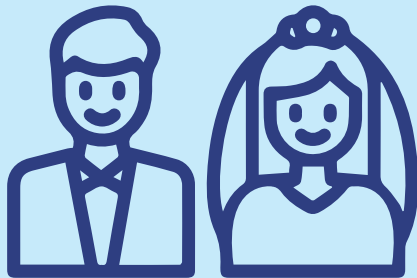
How were you able to connect with such major brands in such a short time?

Like I mentioned earlier, the key is being confident in who you are, putting yourself out there, and making genuine connections. Some partnerships came through family and friends, others from connections we made at conferences, and a few from good old-fashioned cold emails and calls. Just the other day, Aviel and I met someone while playing golf who turned out to be part of a large marketing company in New York. Nothing's come of that connection yet, but it's those little interactions that add up over time.

Do you have any advice for alumni who are just starting the post-yeshiva phase of their lives, especially those pursuing a career path similar to yours?

Like I said earlier, always give 100%, put yourself out there, and make sure to say hi to the person next to you. Networking really is the key to everything.

Mazel Tov!



To the Newlyweds

Avi (2018) & Shifra Weinberg
Tani (2017) & Rochel Gottlieb
Zecharya (2021) & Zoe Young
Chaim (2020) & Atara Zoberman
Yosef (2020) & Jessie Shields
Shimon (2018) & Devorah Kammer
Tzvi (2018) & Elianna Greenberg
Josh (2021) & Tova Toledano
Kovi (2020) & Nediva Suttner
Menachem (2020) & Shoshana Grunwald
Yedidya (2020) & Atara Diena
Netanel (2018) & Abigail Kahn



To the Baby Girls

Rabbi David (2015) & Penina Serfaty
Reuven (2013) & Ilana Levinson
Shloime (2013) & Jen Marder
Mordechai (2014) & Elisheva Keslassy
Benyamin (2009) & Briendy Rubinoff



To the Baby Boys

Dani (2017) & Tzivi Weitz
Daniel (2012) & Ayala Marmer
Dov (2015) & Tamar Sitnik
Eitan (2016) & Leah Dorfman
Shimmy (2009) & Ariella Katscher
Dani (2018) & Atara Berman
Shlomie (2019) & Kayla Ingber
Daniel (2011) & Devora Mittelman
Eli (2013) & Brina Lipson



To the Bar & Batei Mitzvah

Rabbi Shmuel & Leah Katz on the
Bar Mitzvah of their son Yehuda Eliezer

#tbt

