

From the Writings of Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher z"l

T'SHUVA - Going BACK to the Future

There was a cute movie in 1985 with the Jewish actor Michael J. Fox called "Back to the Future". This is exactly what the T'shuva process is all about. Through T'shuva we can reset the clock by actually changing our sinful past.

The Rambam states that T'shuva consists of a 4-step process where we have the awesome opportunity to erase our sins and wipe away the evil resulting from our past transgressions. This is done through the following procedure.

Cease and desist from our sinful behavior.

Feel deep regret, shame, and remorse over our particular sin.

A verbal confession to G-d describing our sin.

Honestly and truthfully resolve never to commit that particular sin again.

This T'shuva process has the incredible power to totally erase our sin and restore the sinner to his spiritual level prior to the sin. In fact the Talmud in Yoma 86 states that if one does T'shuva only because of his love of G-d and not for any ulterior motive,

then that sin actually and wondrously becomes a Merit for the person!

The Talmud Peshachim 54 makes an astonishing statement that T'shuva's creation pre-dates the creation of the universe! The ability to go back in time and rectify one's sinful past is so outer worldly that its creation preceded the natural order of the universe's design.

The ARI z"l gives us a Kabbalistic understanding of this unusual Talmudic statement. He states the reason the Torah begins with the word B'REISHIT (in the beginning) is because G-d's first creation was a beginning, the onset of time.

Once G-d created time, there was no way to rewind the clock. This would remove the ability to do T'shuva, by going back to the past to reverse past events.

Thus, Kabbala teaches that G-d had to create T'shuva BEFORE creating time, in order to enable us to go above and beyond the laws of nature and turn back the clock to rectify our past sins.

This is the wonderful gift of T'shuva that G-d gives us during these days of Elul. Let us appreciate this wondrous gift to go back in time and to start all over again with a clean slate! -ESP

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH