



The Great Reset

A *chassid* once came to Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk and asked if he could see how the Rebbe performs *kapparot*. The holy master told the *chassid* that if he really wants to see a holy and meaningful *kapparot*, he should go to Reb Moshe, the innkeeper who lived in another town.

Obediently, the *chassid* made his way to Reb Moshe to see how he performed *kapparot* on Erev Yom Kippur. He reached the modest house and saw a man sitting at a table. And this is what he overheard:

“My dear wife, please bring the two booklets I keep throughout the year.”

Reb Moshe opened the first one and began to cry as he read his list of sins aloud. “*Ribbono Shel Olam*, Master of the Universe, I know I made a lot of mistakes throughout the year. I didn’t keep your Torah and I transgressed many of your commandments.”

He then closed the first book and spoke in a serious tone: “Master of the Universe, I admit my faults and mistakes. But with Your permission, I would like to read from this other book.” Reb Moshe opened the book and began to describe the suffering of our Exile, and all the poverty, starving, persecutions and isolation the Jewish people had suffered that year.

Reb Moshe raised his voice and said, “Dear G-d, I have a deal for you – let’s delete my book and Your Book. Let’s

turn over a new leaf. I’ll try my best and I hope You’ll do the same – הָאֵלֹהִים תַּחַת.”

The year of 5780 was a very challenging one. We experienced bitterness, loneliness and suffering. We still mourn and regret the passing of relatives and friends. Society faces a scary and uncertain future. Many people would indeed like to delete the memory of these last few months.

I doubt if many of us have the courage, purity and holiness of Reb Moshe to make this kind of deal with G-d. Even to describe and list our good deeds and merits is a little presumptuous, as the *passuk* says “If you are righteous, what do you give Him?” (Job 35:7).

Of course, our Sages teach us that we are not allowed to erase nor obliterate the past. On the contrary, we have the obligation to remember and grow from adversity, as human beings, as a nation and as a society.

Rambam says, “Among the ways of repentance are, for the penitent to continue to cry out in tearful supplication before Hashem” (Hilchot Teshuva 2, 4). “Sins which he had made confession of one Day of Atonement, one should repeat and make a confession on every other Day of Atonement, though he continues to be a penitent” (ibid. 8).

Repentance consists of a continuous process of recollection, recalling our faults and contemplating the

vicissitudes of our past. This process brings us closer to the Creator and gives us a deeper perspective on life and meaning.

At this time of the year, G-d calls for a “Great Reset.” For the last decade and more, mankind has advanced in so many fields: technology, medicine, economics, industry, etc. The feeling of “וְהָיִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹקִים” – and you became like G-d, seemed appropriate. Suddenly though, this year it all came crumbling down. We have literally felt the verse תִּלְוָה אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִימָה (Job 26:7), “Who suspends earth over nothingness.”

It’s not all doom and heaviness though. Throughout this pandemic, we have also witnessed many positive deeds and initiatives. Inspiring acts of *chesed*, people supporting and caring for one another and an increase of global online Torah learning.

My personal lessons from the pandemic are developing a stronger and deeper connection with G-d, appreciating His World and Magnificence and a more powerful feeling of belonging to *Am Yisrael*.

During this coming year, I pray to translate those feelings into actions that will improve our world.

Rabbi Shmuel (Saul) Paves is Community Rav at Minian Israel (formerly Bnei Akiva) and Vice-President of Mizrahi Brazil. He was also Ram at Yeshivat Or Israel College and Headmaster of Yavne School.