

Ha'Azinu	(Give Ear)	"Down But Never Out"
Torah:	Deut. 32:1-52 (32:11; 32:21; 32:43; 32:46, 7)	
Haftarah:	2 Sam. 22:1-51 (22:9; 19; 24; 29; 36)	
Brit Chadashah:	Rom. 10:17-11:12; 12:19; 15:9, 10 (Rom. 11:11, 12)	
Special Readings:	Hos. 14:2-10(2, 9); Mi. 7:18-20(19); Jo. 2:13-27(19, 26, 27 , Am. 9:11- 15)	
<u>L-rd's Table</u>		

There are several aspects of repentance, or returning which I want to briefly examine with you this morning, on this, the third day of the New Year 5768.

First let me again **define** repentance: Ez. 33:11. It has four characteristics: (1) to **stop doing** what you know is wrong and **not just admitting it** (2) to **seek forgiveness**, part of which means **accepting responsibility for the actions and damage** (3) to **start doing** what you know is right, part of which is settling accounts – **undoing as much of the damage that is still within you power** (4) **learn not to fall** into spiritual disobedience (develop proactive spiritual technologies-habits and attitudes), **so you are not just avoiding sin, but you are actually serving G-d.**

Now let me deal with four aspects of repentance which will help us get the most out of this kind of spiritual intervention – for maximum cleansing, and maximum healing.

(1) How do you handle people who do not want to repent?

- (a) Mat. 6:14, 15 (if you stop forgiving you stop being forgiven)
- (b) Matt. 18:22; (seven times seventy times a day)
- (c) Rom. 12:18 (as much as it is up to you)
- (d) 2 Thess. 3:6 (stay away from those who live in spiritual disorder)
- (e) 2 Thess. 3:13-15 (There is a special category of difficult, unrepentant people you cannot avoid: coworkers and family members and toxic neighbours, here you have minimum contact and you take responsibility to do good – to do your job and have no personal intimacy with them, not as an enemy, but warning them as a brother – **retreat to the liveable minimum**, keeping your own nose clean (1 Tim. 5:22)
- (f) 2 Tim. 2:24-26. (They are snared by the enemy, do not get pulled into their snare by arguing. Learn to be gently firm, patient and meek - and if that doesn't work, see (e) above).

(2) How do you relate to the one who returns and wants to pick up where they left off, as if the damage and loss of trust has not occurred?

It's called restitution, if it involves property and starting over if it involves relationships (respect is given trust is earned). Repentance restores respect; trust still has to be earned and requires a period of probation and an understanding with redefined parameters to safeguard boundaries, limits and rhythm. (Amos 3:3 & 1 Pe. 3:8; Eph. 4:25-32)

(3) How do you prevent weaknesses like stubbornness, blindness and rashness from getting you into trouble?(like Churchill's "unnecessary war") (Rom. 5:3-5; Heb. 5:11-15; Prov. 22:3)

(4). How you do handle weaknesses who people repent but are able to break free? (the habits, attitudes and other dysfunction). 2 Cor. 2:5-11 discipline which **does not reject nor condone**, but **encourages** and **empowers** and **reminds**, but which **also does not in any way participate in that which is unacceptable** (i.e. alcoholics, drug addicts, thieves, "rage-aholics" and the like – 2 Cor. 6:9-11). **We do not permit the practice of any toxic, dysfunctional sinful behaviour in our midst**, not because we think we are so good, but because we are called to be very good, even in the midst of the spiritual darkness which we live and all the difficult people who want to drag us down into their carnality (Gal. 5:19, 20) while we are trying to tend the garden of our spirit (Gal. 5:22) and build our lives into an acceptable habitation for G-d's indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 3:9-15 and Matt. 7:24-27). (Samuel the Torah scribe is today's Jewish hero)