



*Shir HaShirim analogizes the relationship between Klal Yisroel and Hashem to a great king who sought to marry. All of the kings of the world aspired to give their daughters to him in marriage. He, however, didn't want to marry a princess, so that she not be conceited. He, therefore, married a lowly girl from amongst some slaves, who had pure and refined lineage. Although her friends and all of the kings were jealous of her, as long as she was in the house of the king and in good standing they could do her no harm, for her husband was more powerful than all. However, when she betrayed her husband, became depraved in his eyes and was sent from his house, he hid his face from her. All of the kings of the land who hated her said: The day we have awaited has arrived! However, the king had written in her kesuba that even if he would send her away he would return to her if she would return and cry out to him. Eventually, in her poverty and hardship, recalling all she had during the times that she was virtuous in the eyes of the king, and **upon reading her kesuba, what he promised her, she is consoled and begs her husband to return and to kiss her as he had done in times gone by**, for his love is more precious to her than all of the pleasures of the world! (Vilna Gaon, Shir HaShirim 1:1)*

The closing sentence of the Gaon quoted above is analogous to the process we call "Teshuva". We see from his words that the wife's "recalling all she had during the times that she was virtuous in the eyes of the king," despite the unbelievable happiness it encompasses, isn't enough to compel her to do teshuva, rather, this only occurs, "Upon reading her kesuba, **what he promised her**," that, "He would return her if she would return and cry out to him." It seems from here that the certainty that Hashem will always accept our *teshuva* is a prerequisite to our truly being able to invest the effort in the process.

This idea is brought out in the words of Rabbeinu Yona in his *Yesod HaTeshuva* where he shows the path to succeed in *teshuva*:

*A person who sinned and comes to take refuge under the wings of the shechinah and enter the pathways of repentance, I will enlighten you and show you the way. On that day, he should throw away all of the sins which he transgressed, and view himself like a newborn baby, who has no merits and no sins. He is starting anew on that day, and on that day, he will take heed of his ways not to stray away from the good path. This path will bring him to complete repentance, as he will be as one who throws off the weight of the sins which he committed. His thoughts will not intimidate him and hold him back from repentance because he is shameful of his sins, thinking: "How can I have the audacity to repent, I have transgressed, sinned, I have done such and such, time and again, three times and innumerable times, and how can I still come before Him when I am like a thief as he is being apprehended, so too I am embarrassed to stand in front of Him, how can I trample His courtyard and keep His laws." One should not think like that, as the Satan sits like a fly in the entrance of his heart, inciting him anew every day, waiting for an opportunity to cause him to stumble, and putting such thoughts in his mind. He should only consider Hashem's way; to stretch out His hand to accept those who repent. Therefore, it is beneficial to throw away all of his sins and acquire a new heart.*

