



### LESSONS FROM AN OX

*19 Kislev, 5746-1985*

*This week's Torah portion teaches the laws of an ox that gores. Every ox is considered "tame." But if it gores three times, it is considered "aggressive."*

*The Rebbe teaches a practical lesson from these laws.*

The traits of a "tame ox" and an "aggressive ox" are reflected in man's divine service, and particularly in a person's animal soul.

The animal soul can express itself in one of two ways.

One way is 'tamely': "All Jews are considered righteous," since they are all descendants of "Yaakov – who was perfect." The other type of evil inclination coerces the person, as Maimonides explains, to actions that are not exactly perfect.

This is analogous to the "aggressive ox," – although it was originally considered 'tame' by Torah, it later became 'aggressive.' In today's three chapters of Rambam, Maimonides enumerates several ways the status of an aggressive ox, – which previously fit the criteria of a reckless animal – through a slight change, can reverse its 'aggressive' status, and is again considered 'tame.' Even a minor change, as long as it is a change, can achieve this.

This is also a lesson concerning a "tame animal soul," and to an animal soul, which due to its evil inclination, has become "aggressive." The lesson: If he makes even a minor change in this instance, it is Teshuva – return, which can be achieved in one short moment.

The Talmud relates, even one who is completely wicked – he is "complete," but in the opposite of righteousness – if he merely contemplates Teshuva – a minor change, he has taken no action yet – he's nevertheless considered "tame" again.

Here we see a practical living lesson from Torah: No matter one's past sins, nevertheless, the law is that through even a minor change, he is instantly transformed to the level of "complete Tzaddik." And more so, his level is even greater than an ordinary person.

He has an advantage over others: A person who was always "tame," always pious, is at a great level, the level of Tzaddik.

A Ba'al Teshuva however, who was 'aggressive' and then did Teshuva – not only is higher than the level of the Tzaddik, but as the commonly quoted version states: He "cannot reach the Ba'al Teshuva's place"! – It is beyond the ability of a Tzaddik to attain the lofty level of a Ba'al Teshuva, a returnee.



## פרשת משפטים

As Maimonides says on the greatness of the Ba'al Teshuva: Not only is he cherished again as before he sinned, but much more, G-d says, "before he beseeches Me... I shall respond to him!" A Tzaddik must pray and when he entreats G-d, G-d grants his requests; Concerning the Ba'al Teshuva however, the verse states, and Maimonides quotes it as a halachic ruling, even before he prays, G-d heeds his call! This is an advantage Jews have while in exile.

Even with regard to a complete Tzaddik, in exile, we say: Why is he in exile? "As a result of our sins." He's a complete Tzaddik, yet if he's in exile, we state in our prayers before G-d, that he was "exiled from our "Land," due to our sins.

Thus, every single Jew in exile needs to do Teshuva.

And Jews pray before G-d, the King of all kings, "We hope for Your salvation all day," and "May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy." And there are many who verbally recite Ani Maamin: "I believe in the imminent redemption every day." And there is the known Midrash, printed numerous times and cited by the Radak: One is obligated to demand the building of the Temple, which will occur with the true and ultimate redemption.

Surely every Jew wants to fulfill this Midrash, especially since it is an enjoyable directive to fulfill! There is no need to argue the point, surely every Jew wants it and cries out.

Every Jew makes the tumult "Why has Moshiach not yet come?! Year after year passes, and he has yet to arrive! The intention here is not, G-d forbid, to come with complaints, and surely not to G-d.

We're demanding action! True results!: That Moshiach should come and redeem us and lead us upright to our Land, speedily and instantaneously, on the clouds of the heavens, quicker than quick!

