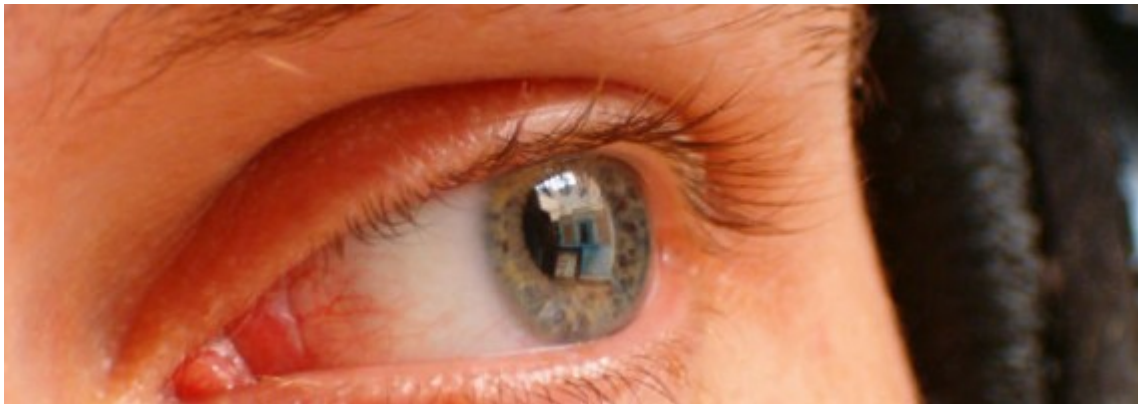


Shovavim and Tikkun HaBrit

written by Ephraim Portnoy
January 11, 2011



The Rebbe doesn't mention Shovavim at all throughout his sefarim, and Reb Nosson mentions it only once. There are those who wonder that being that the major theme of Shovavim is Shmirat HaBrit, a central theme in Breslov in general, why did the Rebbe not make such a big deal about it as other Tzaddikim did.

One answer that I've heard is just that the Rebbe didn't limit our Avodah in Shemirat HaBrit to six to eight weeks a year. The Rebbe revealed a Tikkun HaKlali which pertains to every day of the year. A Breslover Chassid is supposed to be busy with Shmirat HaBrit his whole life.

But then we encounter another question. Why does the Rebbe make such a major concern about a subject which many people feel should better be hushed up? Doesn't discussing the matter just make things worse?

Truth be told, this is a question that we hear very often from detractors of Breslov. We often hear people who don't really know much about Breslov (who of course think they do) criticize us that the Rebbe puts too much needless pressure on people by discussing these things, and its discussion can lead to depression, etc.

But someone who understands Breslov in general and the Rebbe's

approach to Shmirat HaBrit in particular, understands that this question doesn't even start.

The Rebbe isn't here to tell us how bad we are, or how terrible a thing it is to give into our materialistic passions. We have more than enough mussar sefarim out there which can do that job for us.

Rebbe Nachman reveals a *Tikkun*. A Tikkun means that the Rebbe is directing us and leading us on a path how to get out of our problems. A Tikkun means a solution. The Rebbe has no purpose in getting us worked up and nervous about something which we can't do anything about anyways.

If the Rebbe brings up any idea, any spiritual level, it's because he's guiding us as to how to reach and achieve those spiritual heights which he's describing.

If people are afraid to talk about Shmirat HaBrit, it's because they have already despaired about doing anything about it. At least they will confine it to six weeks every winter.

If the Rebbe did talk about it, it's because he knew the way out, and he is revealing it to us.

If we follow his guidance, we have nothing to worry about at all. We only have what to be excited about, knowing that we are on our way to spiritual redemption.