

GUILTY PARTY

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Guilt! Psychiatrists have earned millions of dollars relieving people of their guilt. All that time and money must prove that guilt is a bad thing that the great minds of our generation should be working on to eradicate. The fact of the matter is that guilt is neither good nor bad. Its nature depends on the effect it has on an individual. If a person is feeling pangs of guilt and they let it get them down, the recuperative potential of guilt can be superseded by dangerous depression.

Our sages teach that G-d created guilt as a spiritual counterpart to pain or hunger. Physical pain is a call to action. It is your body saying, "Something is wrong here that must be attended to--quickly!" Failure to respond can result in serious complications. Pain is actually a warning system--a valuable gift from G-d.

Guilt is the pain of the spirit. It starts to act up when you have done something that is harmful to your soul. Instead of prompting bandages, anti-biotic and painkillers it is meant to prompt feelings of regret and resolve never to repeat our spiritual failure [teshubah]. The human being is unique in that we can change and grow. Guilt is the alarm system that tells us we are going in the wrong direction and have to make a behavioral adjustment.

Today when guilt strikes don't let it get you down. Appreciate the gift of G-d that warns you when you are in danger. Confront the problem with a plan to fix it! It's a minute that will save your life--literally!

DID YOU KNOW THAT

One who is reciting Grace After Meals [Bircat Ha Mazon] or the blessing "Al Hamihya" and hears Shema Yisrael or Kaddish or Kedusha or Barekhu should not stop to answer because these 2 blessings have the same rules regarding interruption as the Shemoneh Esreh [Amidah]. This rule applies even to the Fourth blessing of Bircat Ha-mazon --Tob U- Metib -- even though its status is Rabbinical [as opposed to the first three blessings which are considered D'Orayta --Torah derived]. The long blessings like Asher Yasar, Boreh Nefashot, and Elohai Neshama are interrupted to answer in these situations [so long as one has said a word of the berakha AFTER the word Ha-Olam]. One does not interrupt the short blessings [like those on food, fragrance or morning blessings] to answer the above listed recitations [debarim b'kdusha].

[Source Yalkut Yosef vol 3, Siman 183:3]

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