

Fill Your Own Cup – Year Two

Session Two: What Is Teshuva Anyway?

“There is a candle in your heart,
ready to be kindled.
There is a void in your soul,
ready to be filled.
You feel it, don’t you?”

- From: ‘Hush Don’t Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi’

1) Leviticus 23:23-25

23 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
24 Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts.
You shall not work at your occupations; and you shall bring an offering by fire to the LORD.

ויקרא כג פסוקים כג – כה

(כג) וידבר יְקוּק אל משה לאמר:
(כד) דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֵאמֹר: בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ, יְהִי לָכֶם
שַׁבָּתוֹן-זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ.
(כה) כָּל-מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ;
וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֲשֶׁה, לַיהוָה:

2) Vayikrah Rabbah 29:1

It is taught in the name of R. Eliezer: on the 25 th day of Elul the world was created.....
It results that on the Rosh Hashanna (the first day of the Jewish month of Tishrei [the seventh month on the Jewish Calendar] and the 6 th day of creation):
In the first hour, God has the idea to create humanity.
In the second hour, God discussed it with the heavenly angels.
In the third, God gathered his dust.
In the fourth, God outlined him.
In the fifth, God carved him out.
In the sixth, God made him a golem (like a lump).
In the seventh, God breathed a soul into him.
In the eighth, God brought him into the Garden.
In the ninth he was commanded.
In the tenth, he sinned.
In the eleventh he was judged.
In the twelfth, he was pardoned.
God said to Adam: This is a sign for your children, just as you stood before Me on this day, and you were pardoned, so too your children will stand before Me in judgment on this day and they will be pardoned before Me.
When is this?
On the first day of the seventh month.

ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשה כט:א

בחדש השביעי באחד לחדש
הה"ד (תהלים קיט) לעולם ה' דברך נצב
בשמים תני בשם ר"א בכ"ה באלול נברא
העולם...
אתה אומר ביום ראש השנה

בשנה ראשונה עלה במחשבה
בשניה נתייעץ עם מלאכי השרת
בשלישי כנס עפרו
ברביעי גבלו
בחמישי רקמו
בששי עשאו גולם
בשביעי נפח בו נשמה
בשמיני הכניסו לגן
בתשיעי נצטוו
בעשירי עבר
באחד עשר נידון
בשנים עשר יצא בדימוס
אמר הקב"ה לאדם זה סימן לבניך כשם
שעמדת לפני בדין היום הזה ויצאת
בדימוס כך עתידין בניך לעמוד לפני בדין
ביום זה ויוצאין לפני בדימוס
אימתי
בחדש השביעי באחד לחדש.

3) Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Commentary to the Siddur

The first step of Teshuva which is the most essential and at the same time the most difficult, is Viduy, the confession, or rather the admission to oneself that one has sinned. It is not God who needs an avowal or confession from us, for God knows us through and through; in fact better than we know ourselves. But, we ourselves are very much in need of honest and unreserved confession it is to our own selves that we must admit that we have done wrong, for without such a confession to ourselves, we can never become better. It is a difficult admission indeed for a man to make. There is within each and every one of us a small defender who is ready at all times to deny outright that we have done wrong at all, or at least to make excuses, to mitigate and cloak our transgressions, In this manner our defender veils from our eyes the true picture of ourselves as we really are, but, by so doing, also effectively blocks the path to our betterment. Therefore, the first, the most essential and indispensable part of the confession that we must make to ourselves is "Aval Anachnu Chatanu – Truly, we have sinned."

4) Pesikta Rabbati, Pesika 44 – Return Israel

Return Israel to God, your God –

This is comparable to the son of a King that was 100 days distance away from his father. His friends said to him, return to your father, he said to them – I am unable! His father sent him a message and said: "Walk as far as you can, and I will come to you for the rest of the way." This is what God said to them, Return to me and I will return to you.

פסיקתא רבתי פיסקא מד - שובה ישראל

שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך
לבן מלך שהיה רחוק מאביו מהלך מאה יום,
אמרו לו אוהביו חזור אצל אביך, אמר להם איני
יכול, שלח אביו ואמר לו הלך מה שאתה יכול לפי
כחך ואני בא אצלך בשאר הדרך, כך אמר להם
הקדוש ברוך הוא שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם
(מלאכי ג' ז.)

5) Midrash Eicha Rabba Section 5 – Return us God

Return us God to You –

The Jewish people said to God – *Return us God to You,*
God said to them – *Return to me, and I will return to you.*

They said before God: **"Master of the universe, is it ours? It is Yours!** Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your indignation toward us to cease.

איכה רבה פרשה ה"ד השיבנו ה'

השיבנו ה' אליך
אמרה בנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה השיבנו ה' אליך,
אמר להם הקב"ה שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם (מלאכי
ג ז), אמרה לפניו רבש"ע, שלנו היא? שלך היא!!
שובנו אלהי ישענו והפר כעסך עמנו (תהלים פה ה)