

## Fill Your Own Cup – Year Two

### *Session Three: Finding Our Voices on Yom Kippur*

#### **1) UneTaneh Tokef Prayer**

Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness, for it is awesome and frightening. On it Your Kingship will be exalted; Your throne will be firm with kindness and You will sit upon it in truth. It is true that You alone are the One Who judges, proves, knows, and bears witness; Who writes and seals, Who counts and Who calculates. You will remember all that was forgotten. **You will open the Book of Remembrances — it will read itself — and each person's signature is there. And the great shofar will be sounded and a kol demama dakah still, thin voice will be heard.** Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them — and they will say, 'Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to muster the heavenly host for judgment!' — for even they are not guiltless in Your eyes in judgment."

#### **2) Kings I 19:9 – 13**

(9) And he came there into a cave, and slept there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and God said unto him: 'Why are you here, Elijah?' (10) And he said: 'I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword; and I am the only one left; and they seek my life, to take it away.'

(11) And God said: 'Go. Stand upon the mountain before the LORD.' And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

(12) And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire; **and after the fire a kol demama daka – a still small voice.**

(13) And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said: 'Why are you here, Elijah?'

#### **מלכים א פרק יט**

(ט) ויבא שם אל המערה וילן שם והנה דבר יקוק אליו ויאמר לו מה לך פה אליהו: (י) ויאמר קנא קנאתי ליקוק אלהי צבאות כי עזבו בריתך בני ישראל את מזבחתך הרסו ואת נביאיך הרגו בחרב ואותר אני לבדי ויבקשו את נפשי לקחתה:

(יא) ויאמר צא ועמדת בהר לפני יקוק והנה יקוק עבר ורוח גדולה וחזק מפרק הרים ומשבר סלעים לפני יקוק לא ברוח יקוק ואחר הרוח רעש לא ברעש יקוק: (יב) ואחר הרעש אש לא באש יקוק **ואחר**

#### **האש קול דממה דקה:**

(יג) ויהי כשמע אליהו וילט פניו באדרתו ויצא ויעמד פתח המערה והנה אליו קול ויאמר מה לך פה אליהו:

#### **3) Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen, Prayer and Penitence, pp. 73 – 74**

The Phrase still small voice (kol demamah dakah) has become such a popular idiom in the English language that few are aware of the inherent problem its translation presents. The Hebrew word demamah is from the root dmm, meaning "to be (struck) dumb," "to be silent." It is very difficult therefore to make sense of this concept, of a voice that is both "silent" and yet, at the same time, "small" (or "thin," which approximates closer to the usual meaning of the Hebrew dakah)! It clearly can only refer, therefore, to an inner voice, the voice of the emotions, the silent call of the heavenly beloved that the God-intoxicated swear they can hear, so real is the proximity of the presence. God was demonstrating powerfully to Elijah that there was no place for fear, depression, or self-doubt, however bleak the circumstances of his plight. God could, of course, cause cataclysmic havoc – wind, earthquake, fire – to manifest Himself and to defend protect and guide His chosen prophet. But the most effective protection was the incomparable sense of security induced by man of faith's own unswerving conviction that he possesses an inner guiding and directing voice, "a still small voice," that, though still and inaudible to those around, and though small, in the sense that the prophet himself may not

always be totally certain that he hears, and understands its import, it is indubitable a force within him, a manifestation of a higher will, in which the man of God should glory and in accordance with which he should continue fearlessly with his life's mission.

"The great shofar is sounded" on this holy day. But it is not what which will induce the ideal state of repentance. This can only be achieved by our listening out for what is within us – the still small voice. It is the internalization of our desperate desire for God's proximity that will create that potent inner voice. It is not the externally, and artificially, induced vibrations of even the greatest and loudest shofar. God may be sensed far more easily within our own soul – where God already resides – than by looking further afield for any evidence of His existence.

#### **4) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot 7a**

R. Yohanan says in the name of R. Yose: How do we know that the Holy Blessed One prays?

Because it says: Even them will I bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer.

It is not said, 'their prayer', but 'My prayer'; hence [you learn] that the Holy Blessed One prays.

What does God pray?

R. Zutra b. Tobi said in the name of Rav: 'May it be My will that My mercy may suppress My anger, and that My mercy may prevail over My [other] attributes, so that I may deal with My children in the attribute of mercy and, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice'.

Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha said: I once entered into the innermost part of the Sanctuary to offer incense and I saw the Lord of Hosts seated upon a high and exalted throne. God said to me: "Ishmael my son, bless Me!" I replied, "May it be your will that your mercy may suppress your anger and may your mercy prevail over your other attributes, so that You may deal with your children according to the attribute of mercy, and may, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice!"

And God nodded to me.

And this comes to teach us that the blessing given by an ordinary person should never be light in your eyes.

#### **תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות ז:**

א"ר יוחנן משום ר' יוסי מנין שהקב"ה מתפלל?

שנאמר (ישעיהו נ, ז) והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלתי תפלתם לא נאמר אלא תפלתי מכאן שהקב"ה מתפלל. מאי מצלי?

אמר רב זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב יה"ר מלפני שיכבשו רחמי את כעסי ויגולו רחמי על מדותי ואתנהג עם בני במדת רחמים ואכנס להם לפני משורת הדין.

תניא א"ר ישמעאל בן אלישע פעם אחת נכנסתי להקטיר קטורת לפני ולפנים וראיתי אכתריאל יה' צבאות שהוא יושב על כסא רם ונשא ואמר לי ישמעאל בני ברכני אמרתי לו יה"ר מלפניך שיכבשו רחמיך את כעסך ויגולו רחמיך על מדותיך ותתנהג עם בניך במדת הרחמים ותכנס להם לפני משורת הדין

ונענע לי בראשו

וקמ"ל שלא תהא ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך.