

Class on Tishrei – Section 3

10 Days of Teshuva – Return

The first 10 Days of the month of Tishrei are called the 10 Days of Teshuva, starting with the Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the month and ending with Yom Kippur, the 10th day. Teshuva means return. By the end of Yom Kippur, at sunset, we have achieved a complete return to the part of our soul that is unblemished by the challenges of this world. It's like we're connected again with G-d and to our True self and renewed for the coming year.



Song of Return

Here's a link to a beautiful song written by the late rabbi, Reb Shlomo Carlebach:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R0ObSR1yhI>

Written in the Book of Life

One prayer that we say during Rosh Hashana, at the beginning of the 10 days is a bit frightening but it really brings home what the energy of the High Holy days is all about:

"On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: how many shall pass on, and how many shall be born; who shall live, and who shall die; who in his time, and who before his time; who by fire and who by water; who by sword

and who by beast; who by hunger and who by thirst; who by storm and who by plague; who by choking and who by stoning... Who shall rest, and who shall wander; who shall be tranquil and who shall be harassed; who shall be at peace and who shall suffer; who shall become poor, and who shall become rich; who shall fall and who shall rise... But repentance, prayer and charity revoke the evil decree!"

http://www.chabadbythesea.com/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/418982/jewish/The-Unetaneh-Tokef-Prayer.htm

Teshuva intensifies – Shabbos Shuvah

Teshuva intensifies in the days between RH & YK. It begins to feel like the day of reckoning is coming and many ask themselves, what else can I do to repair my relationship between G-d and my fellow. The Shabbat in between RH and YK is called the Shabbos Shuvah or the Shabbos of Return. It is an important day of the month of Tishrei because it has both the energy of the Sabbath along with the energy of Tshuvah. We are told that this is the best day of the days between the 2 High Holy Days to make amends with others and to be aware of the part of you connected to source.

Correction – Redirecting us to our Purpose

Shabbos Shuvah was the day 6 years ago that a friend insisted on taking me to consult the Stanford tumor board to find out what my treatment should be. It was a day of awakening for me because I was shown just how huge my tumor was and how much in denial I had been. I found out I would need to lose my breast that day. Sometimes Tshuvah can be incredibly humbling.

Forgiveness – Of Ourselves, Of Others

We are told that the forgiveness that is given by G-d on the High Holidays is between ourselves and G-d. Our relationship becomes thoroughly cleansed and renewed but the forgiveness between man and his fellow is not covered by the holidays' cleansing and only by the corrections we make in our relationships with others. In the 12 Steps it's called, making amends.

The Story of Yosef

The story of Joseph and his brothers gives us an understanding of the Jewish perspective on forgiveness. His brothers throw him in a pit filled with snakes, sell him as a slave, tell his father he is dead and he ends up in a dungeon in Egypt before his life turns around. His life turns around to the point that he becomes 2nd in command to the Pharaoh! And this is when he sees his brothers again. He takes care of them but they are afraid now and ask him to not kill them. He says, "Am I instead of G-d? You intended it for evil but it turned out for the good."

Anger is a form of Idolatry

It is said by the sages that anger is a form of idolatry. I am not supposed to be G-d, so I can't judge others. I don't figure out the consequences of others actions or what they need to fix. If I expect others to behave in a certain way, and they don't act that way, I create a resentment towards them inside of myself. This is a Golus mentality. Geulah is when you know that others' actions are between them and G-d. Then, my own life is between me and G-d. Others don't have G-d-like power over me. I am not their victim. True faith in G-d is realization that only G-d is the Source of everything and G-d provides me with all of my needs, not other people or material possessions. It can be very empowering to see things that way.

Nighttime Prayer

There is a prayer about forgiveness in the Siddur (Jewish prayerbook) recited each night before going to sleep. It begins, "Master of the universe! I hereby forgive anyone who has angered or vexed me, or sinned against me, either physically or financially, against my honor or anything else that is mine, whether accidentally or intentionally, inadvertently or deliberately, by speech or by deed, in this incarnation or in any other...may no man be punished on my account. May it be Your will, Lord my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that I shall sin no more nor repeat my sins, neither shall I again anger Your nor do what is wrong in Your eyes..."

Yom Kippur's Forgiveness – Kol Nidre

Because Moses finally got G-d's forgiveness on Yom Kippur for the debacle of the Golden Calf, this is the holiday that brings in complete forgiveness and renewal. It starts with the Kol Nidre prayer which is very solemn prayer read by the entire community – it is a statement of our commitment to leaving old baggage behind. Kol Nidre cleanses our souls from erroneous vows we have taken on – those beliefs from childhood and different experiences in life that make us believe that we are damaged and far from our Source.

It's a haunting prayer. There is a YouTube that is awesome! He sings it with the proper “kvetch” in his voice! Listen to & watch it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ui98oXK_q1c
And here's the translation: https://www.chabadbythesea.com/library/article_cdo/aid/2702442/jewish/Text-of-Kol-Nidrei-Prayer.htm

The Levels of Soul

Yom Kippur service is divided up into 5 parts which correspond to the 5 levels of the soul. Normally during the week, 3 prayers are said each day, morning, afternoon, evening. On holidays, a 4th prayer is said but only Yom Kippur do we say a 5th prayer which is said as the sun goes down before we break the fast. So that's another reason why it's called the holiest day of the year because we can achieve the connection to the highest level of our soul which is intimately connected to G-d. It is said that during Yom Kippur we are like angels and we dress in all white.

The Kohen Gadol

When the Temple was standing YK was the time when the holiest of all people, the High Priest, Kohen Gadol would go into the holiest of places in the Temple where no one else could ever go except for the Kohen Gadol on YK. The holiest place was the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant was kept. Inside the ark were held the tablets and the manna from the dessert. The Kohen would go in there to ask for forgiveness for the entire people. If he wasn't pure, he would die. Many Kohanim died each year during the time when the 2nd Temple was corrupt.

Avinu Malkeinu

There are many beautiful prayers that are read and sung during the High Holidays that are not recited during any other time of the year. One of the most beautiful is the Avinu Malkeinu which means, “Our Father, Our King”. The link below of Barbara Streisand singing it, gives the transliteration of the Hebrew and also the translation into English. It makes me think about what the Kohen Gadol would actually feel and ask for when going into the Holy of Holies. My favorite rendition of this prayer is sung by Barbara Streisand because of the cry in her voice – the Youtube link for this song follows, along with a quote from Wikipedia about this prayer.

Avinu Malkenu Song/Prayer Youtube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doWF4ArYQz0&list=UUwPT1jt86DfLOzr9YpnkPvg>

OUR FATHER, OUR KING

Our father our king, hear our voice
Our father our king, we have sinned before you
Our father our king, Have compassion upon us
and upon our children

Our father our king
Bring an end to pestilence,
war, and famine around us
Our father our king,
Bring an end to all trouble
and oppression around us

Our father our king,
Our father our king,
Inscribe us in the book of (good) life
Our father our king, renew upon us
Renew upon us a good year

Hear our voice
Hear our voice
Hear our voice

Our father our king,
Our father our king,
Renew upon us a good year

Our father our king,
Hear our voice
Hear our voice
Hear our voice
Hear our voice

Our father our king

Avinu Malkeinu (Hebrew: אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ; "Our Father, Our King") is a Jewish prayer recited during Jewish services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as well on the Ten Days of Repentance from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur. In the Ashkenazic tradition, it is recited on all fast days; in the Sephardic tradition only because it is recited for the Ten Days of Repentance does it occur on the fast days of Yom Kippur and the Fast of Gedaliah.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avinu_Malkeinu

From the Chabad Calendar website:

10 Days of Teshuva “The 10-day period beginning on Rosh Hashanah and ending on Yom Kippur is known as the "Ten Days of Repentance"; this is the period, say the sages, of which the prophet speaks when he proclaims (Isaiah 55:6) "Seek G-d when He is to be found; call on Him when He is near." It is thus a most auspicious time to rectify the failings and missed opportunities of the past and positively influence the coming year. Psalm 130 and other special inserts and additions are included in our daily prayers during these days.

The Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is called *Shabbat Shuvah*, "Shabbat of Return." The name derives from the Haftarah (reading from the prophets) for this Shabbat, which opens with the words (Hosea 14:2), "Return O Israel unto the L-rd your G-d..." According to master Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria ("Ari"), the seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (which will always include one Sunday, one Monday, etc.) correspond to the seven days of the week. The Sunday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur includes within itself all Sundays of the year; the Monday embodies all Mondays, and so on. Shabbat Shuvah is thus the archetypal Shabbat -- the juncture in time at which we are empowered to influence every Shabbat of our year.” <http://www.chabadbythesea.com/calendar/view/day.asp?tDate=9/27/2014>

Assignment: Buy yourself a Siddur. Start saying the nighttime Shema before going to sleep. Attend or host a Shabbos Shuvah meal. Intend to make the most important of your amends on Shabbos Shuvah. Try fasting on Yom Kippur and then break the fast with friends and loved ones.

