

## **Class on Elul – Section 2**

### **Analogy of Marriage**

I'd like to share the example that R. Ruvi New gives in his audio course, "[Chai Elul, The Life of Elul](#)". R. New uses the analogy of a marriage to talk about what has happened over the past 6 months since the other new year in Nissan, Passover. 6 months ago, we celebrated the birth of the Jewish people – G-d came with miracles and wonders, it was like the first phase of any relationship where we are swept off our feet with infatuation. 3 months later we celebrate the marriage on Shavuot when we promised to commit through the 10 commandments. Then a month later, during the 3 weeks between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, culminating on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, we commemorate tragedy and mourn. The 3 weeks is like the time in a marriage when the infatuation fades and we begin questioning the relationship. It can lead to divorce and destruction.

Elul then is the time in a marriage when you realize that the relationship can't be based on infatuation. You have to work at it. The infatuation period we went through during Nissan/Passover is considered "top-down" – a gift we get from our creator – it's not self-created. We have to lose that infatuation in order to build our relationship from the "bottom-up" – from our own hard work and commitment. It's not easy but the reward that comes from that work is bigger and deeper and more permanent than the infatuation that it started with.

### **Failure was Intentionally Created**

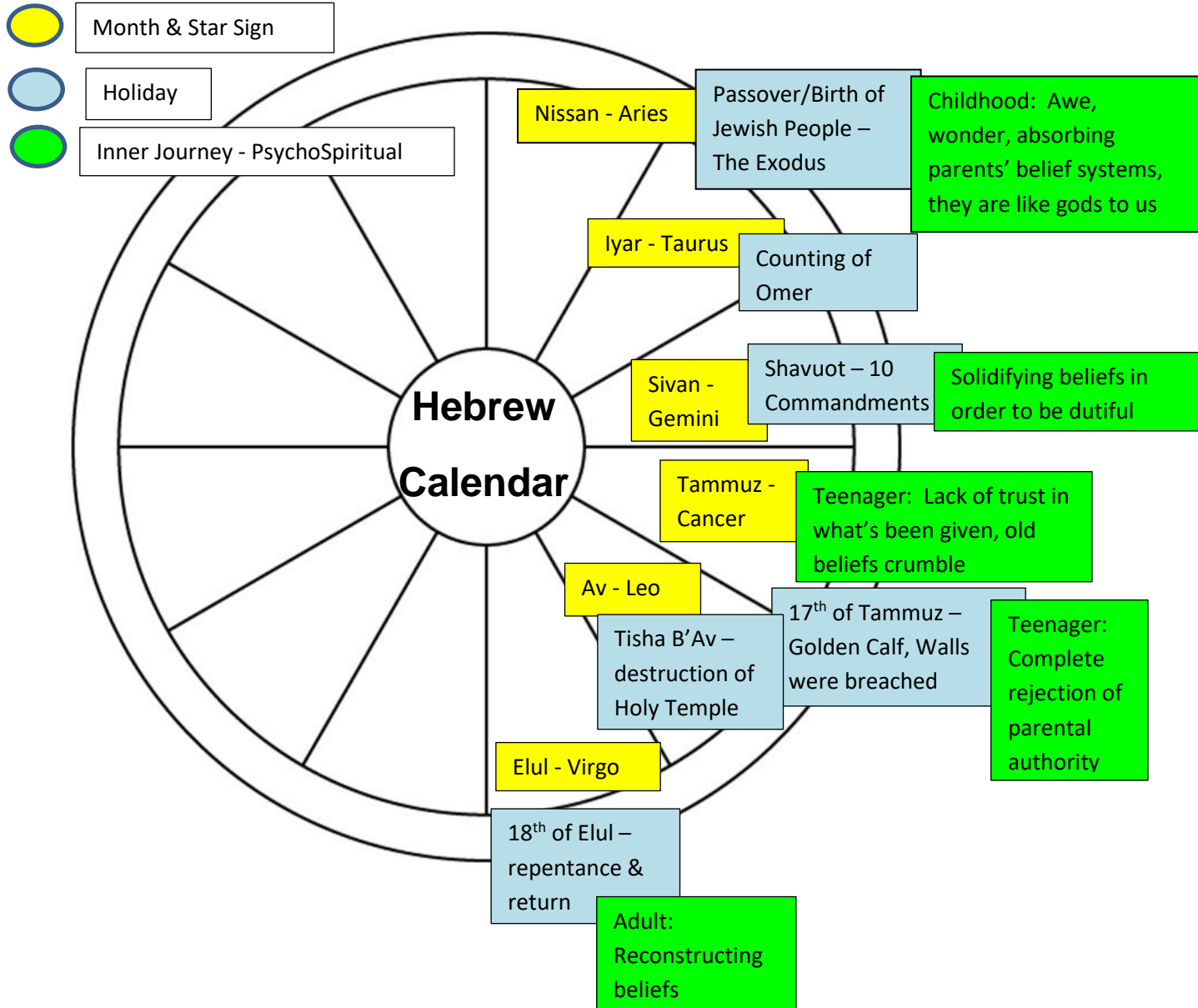
This is the nature of existence in this world. In every situation, we go through the infatuation period, the commitment period, the questioning period and the inevitable destruction. It's the nature of nature and we have to remember that failure is built into the fabric of life for a very good reason. It allows us to build our ladder to heaven from the ground floor. This is the ultimate goal of life and the purpose of existence.

### **Psycho-Spiritual Journey**

I'd like to show how this works on an intra-psychic level. We start life full of awe and wonder. We are so connected to our parents that we internalize beliefs of theirs and create beliefs based on what we think they want from us. Ultimately though, as teenagers, we reject parental authority in order to make our lives our own. Very often the very beliefs that we internalized as youth aren't accurate anyway and it's important to discard them. Mostly we've internalized a very big "Inner Critic" in order to protect us from fear of loss of love. The "critic" is a very angry inner "parent" who you believe you need, to keep you in line.

## Elul – 40 days of forgiveness.

### Diagram of the Inner Journey of Life



We have to reject parental authority in order to make our lives our own. Very often the beliefs we internalized as youth aren't accurate anyway. Mostly we've internalized a very big "Inner Critic" in order to protect us from fear of loss of love. The constructed inner life story is of a very angry "parent" who you need to keep you in line. This is a very immature way of looking at G-d and yourself - the angry, judgmental, punishing voices in your inner world. As you mature, you can strengthen the "Nurturing Inner Parent" who is eternally compassionate, understanding and forgiving.

## **An Adult G-d**

This Inner Critic becomes associated with our idea of G-d. It is a very immature way of looking at G-d that's all about avoiding punishment by doing all the right things. G-d becomes the Inner Parent that is the angry, judgmental, punishing person of your inner world. As you mature, you can let go of that "Critical Inner Parent" and turn it into a "Discerning Parent" (Gevurah) while strengthening the "Nurturing Inner Parent" who is eternally compassionate, understanding and forgiving (Keter). In the month of Cheshvan, I will show how the Inner Parent can be understood through the lens of the Sefirot on the Tree of Life where Gevurah, Chesed & Keter can be seen to represent the Inner Parent, while the Inner Child can be seen as Tiferet.



### **Everyone Gets to the World to Come**

What I find so fascinating about the Jewish religion compared to other religions is we have a book full of stories of ancestors who were very flawed. In fact, King David, one of the most revered of our ancestors, killed off the husband of the woman he loved by sending him to the front lines of war. He was an adulterer and murderer. Yet the Moshiach (Messiah) we are told, will come from the Davidic line. We can be flawed and even still, we can bring in a utopia.

That's the message of Elul. The Nurturing Parent doesn't care where we've been or what we've done. Forgiveness is everlasting and bountiful because we are here for a reason and we have to get our hands dirty in order to fulfill our mission. Elul is the time when we build from below to above. The promised utopian future is in our hands and will be here on a supernatural earth.

**Assignment** – Write out how a relationship or project mirrored the stages outlined in the above diagram. 1. The child stage: The miraculous download of inspiration (like the Exodus) and internalization of beliefs, 2. The teenager stage: A complete destruction and rejection of everything that came before (The Temples are destroyed), and lastly 3. The Adult stage – a reworking of old ideas and making them more in alignment with Higher Truth (like in Elul when we find a deeper connection to ourselves and our purpose in G-d's plan).