

The Biblical theme of teshuva -From Adam to Achav /class #1 - The Sinners & Their Regret in Sefer Breishit

Source sheet for TIM shiur by Menachem Leibtag/

INTRODUCTION

For the month of Elul, we take a break from our series on the theme of each book of the Bible, and we will focus instead on the specific theme of "teshuva" in Tanach- beginning as usual, from Sefer Breishit.

We begin today's shiur with a study a famous piyut, which will explain our title for this short series:

I. The piyut [minhag ashkenaz for tzom gedalya]

**הוֹרִיתָ דָּרֶךְ תְּשׁוּבָה, לְבֵית הַשׁוֹבְבָה. בֵּין כָּסֶא לְעֵשׂוֹר, עָדִידָהּ לְשׁוּבָה.
הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ, וְנִשְׁוֹבָה:**

You taught the way of repentance to the rebellious daughter [Israel]; between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we are to return unto You [in repentance]. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**אֶז מֵאִז מִקֶּדֶם, הִקְדַּמְתָּ תְּשׁוּבָה. בְּטָרֵם הַמִּתְחַתֶּה עֶרֶץ וִיסוּדֵי רְגוּבָה.
גַּם-לְכָל-הַשָּׁבִים, צָרִי וּמִרְפָּא תְּשׁוּבָה. דּוֹפְקֵי דְלִתֵּיהּ רִיקָם מִלְּהַשִּׁיבָה.
הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ, וְנִשְׁוֹבָה:**

Long ago, from of old, You prepared the way for repentance, before You spread out the mighty heavens, and established the earth; thus, for all who return, repentance is a balm and a remedy. Those who knock at Your door, do not send them away empty-handed. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**הֵן רֵאשׁ עֲפָרוֹת תִּבֵּל, אֲשֶׁר רֵאשׁוֹן נִוצָר.
וְנִסִּיתוֹ בְּמִצְוָה קְלָה, וְאוֹתָהּ לֹא-נָצַר.
זַעַמָּה וְאַנְפֶּת עָלָיו, שְׁנוּתָיו לְקַצֵּר.
חֲזַר-בְּתְשׁוּבָה וְכֹאִישׁוֹן הוֹנָצַר. הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ, וְנִשְׁוֹבָה:**

Behold, the first to be created from dust, Adam, the first to be formed, You tried him with a light commandment, which he did not keep. You were indignant and angry with him, [and decreed] to shorten his years; but when he repented, You preserved him like the apple of Your eye. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**טָעָה גִזְעוֹ דְּמִי-אָחִיו בְּשִׁפְכוֹ. יִסְרָתוֹ בְּנֶעַ וְנָד, לָכֵת כָּה וְכָה.
פָּעַת שְׁבִי-אֵלָיו, וְעִזָּב רָע דְּרַכּוֹ.
לְשִׁבְעָתִים הָאָרְכָתוֹ, כָּל-מוֹצָאוֹ בְּלִי-לֶחֶפּוֹ. הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֵלֵינוּ, וְנִשְׁוֹבָה:**

When his offspring [Cain] went astray by shedding his brother's blood, You sentenced him to be a wanderer, to go from place to place; but when he returned to You and left his evil ways, You prolonged his life to seven generations, anyone who found him was forbidden to slay him. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**מחלל יצוּעֵי יוֹלָדוֹ, אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח בְּמִיָּם. נָטְיוֹ רַגְלָיו כְּמַעַט,
 לוֹלִי שִׁפְךָ לֵב כְּמִיָּם. סָרַח גּוֹר־אַרְיֵה, בִּקְדָּשָׁה הִיא בְּעֵינָיִם.
 עֲוֹנוֹ הוֹדָה, וְהִכְרַעְתּוֹ לְצִדִּיק בְּכַף־מֵאֲזִנָּיִם. הִשְׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, וְנָשׁוּבָה:**

He [who profaned his father's bed, was unstable as water, his feet had almost slipped had he not poured out his heart as water. The young lion [Judah] sinned with Tamar at Enaim, when he confessed his sin, You inclined the scale to justify him. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**פָּרַץ גְּדֵרוֹת עוֹלָם, בְּיָעָמְרִי בְּרָשָׁע.
 צִלְמֵי־אֲשֵׁרִים חָשַׁק, וְהוֹסִיף־עַל חַטָּאתוֹ פָּשָׁע.
 קָרַעַת גִּזְרֵי דִינוֹ בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִלְּפָשָׁע.
 רָחַם כְּמוֹדָה וְעוֹזֵב, וּבָךְ נוֹשָׁע. הִשְׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, וְנָשׁוּבָה:**

He broke the barriers of the world, did [Achav] son of Omri, with his wickedness, he desired to worship the Asherim idols, and added transgression upon sin. You tore up his sentence when he repented of his transgressions; You had mercy on him as he confessed and forsook [his evil way], and in You he found deliverance. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**שָׁנְנוּ לְשׁוֹנָם כְּחֶץ, אֲנָשֵׁי עִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה. שִׁגְיוֹנָם וַיִּזְדוֹנָם רַבּוֹ עַד־לְמַעְלָה.
 תַּתֵּךְ חֲזוֹן הַפִּיכָתָם, אֶחְזוּם רֶתֶת וְחִלְחָלָה.
 תִּשׁוּבָה עָשׂוּ כְּהֶגֶן, וְלִפְנֵי כִסֵּא־כְבוֹדְךָ נִתְקַבְּלָה. הִשְׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, וְנָשׁוּבָה:**

Tongues as sharp as arrows had the people of [Ninveh] the great city, their errors and willful sins were numerous, without count; when You sent the vision of their destruction they were seized with trembling and terror; they repented properly, and it was accepted before Your glorious throne. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

**בּוֹחֵן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב, נֶאֱזָר בְּגִבּוֹרָה. יִדְעֵנוּ מִדַּע לָקַח בְּאַרְחַ יִשְׁרָה.
 מִשׁוּבוֹתֵינוּ אִם־רַבּוֹ בְּפָשָׁע וּסְרָרָה.**

נָא לְמַעַנְךָ הִשְׁיבֵנוּ, עֲשׂוֹת תִּשׁוּבָה פְּשׁוּרָה, הִשְׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, וְנָשׁוּבָה:

You Who searches the innermost heart, and Who is girded with might, teach us that we may know to walk the straight path; if our rebelliousness is great with transgression and crookedness, for Your sake, please, cause us to return, that we should repent in the proper way. Cause us to return to You, Adonoy, and we shall return.

Discuss – How this piyut understands the first stories in Breishit
 Note the refrain from the last lines of “Eicha”

Note Yirmiyahu chapter 3: - & concept of “bat ha’shoveva”

Note how explains the title of the piyut

Note also the conversation between Hashem and His people

How Hashem is encouraging teshuva

& notice “vidui” – confession

See Yirmiyahu 3:6 -25 then note:

כא קול על-שפִּיִּים נִשְׁמָע, בְּכִי תַחֲנוּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כִּי הָעָוָו אֶת-דִּרְכָּם, שָׁכַחוּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם .

כב שׁוּבוּ בָּנִים שׁוֹבְבִים, אֲרַפָּה מְשׁוּבְתֵיכֶם;

הִנֵּנוּ אֲתָנוּ לָךְ, כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ .

כג אֲכֹן לְשָׁקֵר מִגִּבְעוֹת, הַמִּזֶּן הָרִים;

אֲכֹן בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תְּשׁוּעַת יִשְׂרָאֵל .

כד וְהַבִּשֵּׁת, אָכַלָּה אֶת-יָגִיעַ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ--מִנְעוּרֵינוּ: אֶת-

צֹאנִם, וְאֶת-בְּקָרָם, אֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם, וְאֶת-בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם .

כה נִשְׁכַּבָּה בְּבִשְׁתָּנוּ, וּתְכַסֵּנוּ כָּל־מִתָּנוּ--כִּי לִיהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חָטְאָנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, מִנְעוּרֵינוּ וְעַד-הַיּוֹם

הַזֶּה; וְלֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ, בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ .

Discussion:

In pshat – Did Adam do teshuva

Same question re: Kayin

What does the piyut assume, (and why)

Review all the stories in Sefer Breishit

Contrast chapters 1->11 with 12-> end

In what stories does God state his anger

In what stories, do the events carry a message

In what stories do the characters admit their guilt?

Discuss:

Pshuto shel mikra vs. pshuto shel Torah

And it may relate to purpose or goal of “midrash”

II. Stories in Breishit

Adam & Eve - chapter 3

Should have they died immediately upon their sin?

If not, why didn't they?

Kayin

Does Hashem explain why his gift was not accepted?

Why wasn't he punished immediately?

The Flood – reason before vs reason afterward [6:5-7 vs. 8:20-22]

[to be discussed next week as well]

Migdal Bavel

Did they sin? Did they receive a punishment?

Why did they 'give up' on their joint project?

Avraham Avinu

Did God ever accuse him of any wrong-doing?

Do any of the stories raise questions?

Does God talk to them re: their past or their future?

Similar re: Yitzchak & Yaakov

Yosef & his brothers

Does God ever talk to them

Do they recognize their sin, if so, when & why

When do they admit their guilt

, and how does that affect their behavior