

The Awesome Responsibility of Teshuva
Torah in Motion
Nechama Goldman Barash

Lord Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks

Moses insists on three things. First we are free. The choice is ours. Blessing or curse? Good or evil? Faithfulness or faithlessness? You decide, says Moses. Never has freedom been so starkly defined, not just for an individual but for a nation as a whole. We do not find it hard to understand that as individuals we are confronted by moral choices. Adam and Eve were. So was Cain. Choice is written into the human condition.

Abraham Heschel

Man...is a duality of mysterious grandeur and pompous aridity a vision of God and a mountain of dust. It is because of his being dust that his iniquities may be forgiven, and it is because of his being an image that his righteousness is expected.

Bereishit 2:15-18

God יהוה settled the Human in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it.
 And God יהוה commanded the Human, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die."
 God יהוה said, "It is not good for the Human to be alone; I will make a fitting counterpart for him."

בראשית פרק ב

(טו) ויקח יקוק אלהים את האדם וינחהו בגן עדן לעבדה לשמרה:
 (טז) ויצו יקוק אלהים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל:
 (יז) ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות:
 (יח) ויאמר יקוק אלהים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו:

Genesis Rabbah 15:4

R. Nehemiah said: He seduced him to enter and eat thereof, like a king who prepared a banquet and then invited a guest. So too God invited the Man.
 For the sake of Abraham, as it is written, "*Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off*" (Ps. 139, 2).

בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשת בראשית פרשה טו סימן ד

רבי נחמיה אמר פיתה אותו, למלך שעשה סעודה והזמין אורח, כך הזמין הקדוש ברוך הוא את אדם בזכותו של אברהם הה"ד (תהלים קלט) אתה ידעת שבתי וקומי בנת לרעי מרחוק, שבתי בתוך גן עדן, וקומי טירופי מתוכה, בנתה לרעי מרחוק באיזה זכות יעצת לבראני בזכות אותו שהוא בא מרחוק, הה"ד (ישעיה מו) קורא ממזרח עיט מארץ מרחק איש עצתו.

Rashi Genesis 2

And he took – He took him with pleasant words and seduced him to enter [the Garden].

רש"י בראשית פרק ב

(טו) ויקח - לקחו בדברים נאים ופתהו ליכנס:

Rashi Genesis 3 <i>Where are you</i> – He (God) knew where Adam was, but he wanted to engage him with words, so that he would not be overwhelmed from responding if he punished him suddenly.	רש"י בראשית פרק ג (ט) איכה - יודע היה היכן הוא, אלא ליכנס עמו בדברים, שלא יהא נבהל להשיב אם יענישהו פתאום.
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From Wisdom of the Heart: The Teachings of Rabbi Yaakov of Izbica-Radzyn: Creation came into this world through the sin. As the Zohar says, "The First Man had nothing at all of this world." And in the writings of the Holy Ari, before the sin, "he was barely anchored in this world." After the sin, he became firmly placed in this world. That was God's will, so that goodness could be attributed to the work of human hands.
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On Repentance, Rav Joseph Soloveitchik, p. 83, p. 263 When man sins he creates a distance between himself and God. To sin means to remove oneself from the presence of the Master of the Universe. I was standing before you and Sin came and estranged me from you and I no longer feel that I am "before You." The whole essence of the precept of repentance is longing, yearning, pining to return again. Longing develops only when one has lost something precious. Sin pushes us far away and stimulates our longing to return... This is why Rambam wrote: How powerful is repentance for it brings man closer to the presence of God.
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Rav Zadok Hacohen – Pri Zadik Bamidbar Naso 15 And as I heard from the Rebbe of Izbecha, that every soul in Israel, whenever he falls, falls into the lap of Hashem.	ר' צדוק הכהן מלובלין - פרי צדיק במדבר פרשת נשא כמו ששמענו מהרבי מאיזביצא זצ"ל שכל נפש ישראל איך שנופל הוא נופל בחיקו של ה' יתברך.
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?Teshuva: Who returns

Pesahim 54a Seven things were created before the world was createdThe Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah...Repentance, for it is written, "Before the mountains were brought forth" (Psalms 90:2)

Yalkut Shimon Psalms 25 Wisdom was asked, "What should be the punishment for the sinner?" She answered, "Let evil pursue the sinner." Prophecy was asked, "What should be the punishment for the sinner?" She answered, "The soul that sins shall perish." The Torah was asked, "What should be the punishment for the sinner?" She answered, "Let him bring a sacrifice, and be atoned for." The Holy One Blessed be He , was asked, "What should be the punishment for the sinner?" He answered, " Let the sinner repent, and he will find atonement. "

<p>Genesis Rabba 22:13 Adam met Cain and asked, "What was done in punishment of you?" Cain replied, "I vowed repentance and was granted forgiveness." Upon hearing this, Adam in self-reproach began to beat his face as he said, "Such is the power of repentance and I knew it not." Then and there, Adam exclaimed, "It is a good thing to confess to the Lord."</p>	<p>בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשת בראשית פרשה כב סימן ג פגע בו אדם הראשון א"ל מה נעשה בדיןך, א"ל עשיתי תשובה ונתפשרתי, התחיל אדה"ר = אדם הראשון = מטפח על פניו, אמר כך היא כחה של תשובה ואני לא הייתי יודע מיד עמד אדה"ר ואמר (תהלים צב) מזמור שיר ליום השבת טוב להודות לה' וגו', א"ר לוי המזמור הזה אדה"ר אמרו ונשתכח מדורו ובא משה וחדשו על 'שמו מזמור שיר ליום השבת טוב להודות לה' וגו'.</p>
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<p>Yoma 85a It was taught: R Meir used to say, Great is repentance. for on account of an individual who repents, the sins of all the world are forgiven, as it is said: I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. (Hosea 14, 5)</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף פו עמוד ב תניא, היה רבי מאיר אומר: גדולה תשובה, שבשביל חיד שעשה תשובה מוחלין לכל העולם כולו, שנאמר ארפא משובתם אהבם נדבה כי שב אפי ממנו. מהם לא נאמר, אלא ממנו</p>
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<p>Rav Dovid Eibshitz, Megillat Setarim: It is known that man has to do one sin in order to fulfill the mitzvah of teshuva for lo, teshuva is one of the 613 mitzvot....</p>	<p>מגילת סתרים כי ידוע שחטא אחד צריך האדם לעשות כדי לקיים מצות תשובה, כי הלא תשובה הוא אחד מתרי"ג מצות....</p>
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<p>Erica Brown, excerpted from Return: Daily Inspiration for the Days of Awe: Teshuva must exist in concept and act to offer a road out of sin even before an act of sin is committed. The capacity to recalibrate and progress stands in relation to the gravitational pull downwards.</p>	
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Sin Leads to Growth, to Relationship, to Forgiveness

<p>Genesis Rabbah 54:3 And Abraham rebuked Avimelech: R. Yosi ben R. Hanina said: Rebuke leads to love, as it says, rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Such indeed is R. Yosi ben Hanina's view, for he said: Love unaccompanied by rebuke is not love.</p>	<p>בראשית רבה נה:ג וְהוֹכַח אֲבְרָהָם אֶת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְגו' (בראשית כא, כה), אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶר חֲנִינָא הַתּוֹכַחַת מְבִיאָה לַיָּדִי אֲהָבָה, שְׁנֵאמַר (משלי ט, ח): הוֹכַח לְחָכְם וַיֵּאֱהָבֵהּ, הִיא דַּעְתִּיהָ דְרַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶר חֲנִינָא דָאמַר כָּל אֲהָבָה שְׂאִין עִמָּה תּוֹכַחָה אֵינָה אֲהָבָה.</p>
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<p>Hermann Cohen, Jewish neo-Kantian philosopher <u>In myself I have to study sin and through sin I must learn to know myself....</u></p>	
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Rabbi Alan Lew, This is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared:

Every soul needs to express itself. Every heart needs to crack itself open. Every one of us needs to move from anger to healing, from denial to consciousness, from boredom to renewal. These needs did not arise yesterday. They are among the most ancient of yearnings and they are fully expressed in the pageantry and ritual of the Days of Awe in the great journey we make between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Alex Israel:

Redemption through teshuva is complete return. A return of restoration and repair. Where we walk a path which takes effort, the result of the journey is that we reach our destination differently from the way we began. **We have undergone a metamorphosis and the result is that the redemption creates a more perfected reality.** The redemption of teshuva means a redemption of healing, a redemption where we can return to the relationship of the past and face it openly. **We can say that we have reformed and renewed our relationship with God.** The relationship is cleansed of its scars and it now bears signs of potential growth. If the nation repairs the damage that existed between God and themselves, then the relationship with God has the ability to flourish and grow.

If You Look at the Stars and Yawn

Aaron Zeitlin

Praise Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.

Curse Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.

Praise Me or curse Me

And I will know that you love Me.

Sing out My praises, says God

Raise your fist against Me and revile, says God.

Sing out praises or revile,

Reviling is also a kind of praise, says God.

But if you sit fenced off in your apathy, says God

If you sit entrenched in: "I don't care at all," says God,

If you look at the stars and yawn,

If you see suffering and don't cry out,

If you don't praise and you don't revile,

Then I created you in vain, says God.