

Torat Imecha NACH YOMI B'IYUN

Sefer Yoel: Mrs. Elisheva Shmidman

יואל ב:יב-יג

וְגַם-עַתָּה נֹאם-יְקֹנֶק שְׁבוּ עַד־בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְצֹם וּבְבִכָּי וּבְמִסָּפָד: וְקִרְעוּ לְבַבְכֶם וְאֵל-בְּגְדֵיכֶם וּשְׁבוּ אֶל-יְקֹנֶק אֱלֹקֵיכֶם כִּי-חַנּוּן וָרַחוּם הוּא אֶרֶץ אֲפִים וְרַב-חֶסֶד וְנֶחֱם עַל-הָרָעָה:

Yet, even now, says God, turn unto to Me with all your hearts, and with fasting, weeping, and lamenting. Rend your hearts rather than your garments, and turn back to the Eternal your God. For [God] is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in kindness, and renouncing punishment.

הושע יד:ב-ג

שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹנֶךָ:
קָחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וּשְׁבוּ אֶל-יְהוָה אֱמָרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל-תִּשְׁאָ עוֹן וְקַח-טוֹב וְנִשְׁלַמְה פְּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ:

Return Israel to (lit. until) the Eternal, your God, for you have fallen because of your sin. Take words with you and return to God. Say to him: forgive all iniquity and receive us graciously, so we will offer the words of our lips instead of calves.

מלבי"ם על הושע יד:ב (Rav Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel Wissner, 19th century)

הנה תחלה אמר שובה עד ה', מלת עד מציין שה' עומד רחוק מהם והם צריכים ללכת אליו עד שיגיעו עדיו, עד המקום אשר הוא שם

First it mentions, "return until/unto God." The word "until" indicates that God is standing far from them, and they need to go towards Him, until they reach Him, until the place where He is.

וענין השבה עד ה"א כענין בא עד הבית, שטעמו ההתקרבות אל הבית עד שעומד סמוך אליו בריחוק מקום קצת; אמנם אם התשובה היא מאהבת ה' שבזה יתעלה מעלת השב עד שהזדונות נעשות כזכיות... כי יתעלה בזה אל דבקות ה' הגמורה, על תשובה מעליתית זו מחובר תמיד התשובה עם מלת אל ה', וכמאמר בא אל הבית, שהטעם בו ההגעה אל תוך הבית ופנימיותו:

The concept of "returning unto/until Hashem" is like the idea of "coming near to the house" (בא עד הבית), where the meaning is drawing close to the house to the point of standing near it, though still somewhat at a distance. However, if the return (teshuvah) is motivated by love of Hashem, this elevates the returnee to such a degree that even intentional sins are transformed into merits. This is because the individual is elevated to complete attachment to Hashem. Regarding this elevated form of return, the phrase "returning to Hashem" is always connected with the word "to" (אל), as in "coming into the house" (בא אל הבית), where the meaning is reaching the interior and innermost part of the house.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between *שבו עד* / *שובה עד*, "return unto/until" and *ושבו אל*, return to? How does the Malbim explain this difference? What mashal, parable, does HaKsav ve'HaKabbalah give to illustrate the difference?
2. How can their explanations help us understand the process and stages of repentance?
3. Based on the examples/tools for repentance given in the verses above, from Yoel and Hoshea, how can we move from a place of feeling far from God to feeling closer?
4. How can this model of repentance, of rebuilding our relationship to God in stages, in hopes of ever moving closer to Him, help shape the way strengthen and mend our interpersonal relationships?