

Notes: September 27 2025

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Shabbat Shuvah Message – What is T'Shuvah?

What is Shabbat Shuvah?

Shabbat Shuvah literally means "***Sabbath of Return***," but it is also a play on the phrase "***Shabbat T'shuvah***" ("***Sabbath of Repentance***"). It is the Shabbat that occurs between Rosh Hashanah and immediately prior Yom Kippur, that is if during the 10 days there are two Shabbats then it is the one closest to Yom Kippur. It is to be a time for reflection leading up to the atonement of Yom Kippur.

We have spent a great deal of time on this reflection part. Having actually started upon the beginning of the month of Elul, it has been now 39 days of reflection with the intention of seeking His righteousness. How can we draw even closer to Him now than we are? This is a time we have identified when we come together as a congregation, but it must first start with each of you.

Judaism provides a framework for this Shabbat by asserting that every single life is imbued with unique purpose. "***A human being creates many coins from the same die, and they are all identical; the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One blessed is He, coins all people from Adam's die and not one looks like another. This is why every person must say 'The world was created just for me'.***"

This quote from Tractate Sanhedrin Chapter 11 is calling on each individual to recognize his or her uniqueness and as a result to make a distinctive contribution in life. It is not a lesson about taking; it is a lesson about contributing and doing something extraordinary with your life. In other words, it is identifying that which is unique in us leads us to think less about what we need and more about what we are needed for.

Part of this aspect of Righteousness we are pursuing is not about our needs but about how, as His creation, we are to be used for Him, for His purpose.

Psa 139:14 I thank you because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders—I know this very well.

Psa 139:15 My bones were not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Psa 139:16 Your eyes could see me as an embryo, but in your book all my days were already written; my days had been shaped before any of them existed.

Psa 139:17 God, how I prize your thoughts! How many of them there are!

Our service can be viewed in many ways.

Taking care of those in need. 8 times in Deuteronomy we are reminded of the Orphan and the Widow...

Deu 24:19 "When harvesting the grain in your field, if you forgot a sheaf of grain there, you are not to go back and get it; it will remain there for the foreigner, the orphan and the widow, so that Adonai your God will bless you in all

the work you do.

...for whom Yeshua also reminds us that they will be with us as He prepares His talmidim for His departure.

Mat 26:8 When the talmidim saw it, they became very angry. "Why this waste?" they asked.

Mat 26:9 "This could have been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor."

Mat 26:10 But Yeshua, aware of what was going on, said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for me.

Mat 26:11 The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

Yet, it can also convey service to Him. There is no greater act of service than sharing the Good News of The Kingdom of Adonai, where Yeshua is our King.

Yeshua spent the last years of His life proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. This message was then taken up by His talmidim, those that were with Him and followed Him. Their service was dedicated to His work. I am not saying that you are to throw everything away, but I am saying it is to be part of your life. You are indeed His witnesses to the T'shuvah you have already done and how this turn has transformed your lives. Yes there are times when we struggle, when we consider ourselves not to be worthy of His mercy and thus our forgiveness, but, it is faithful persistence on our part that once the truth of Adonai's Good News has been revealed to us, we can no longer be the same and thus we must be transformed. This transformation is ongoing because we still endure battles with our old self, that pesky residue that still remains.

Sha'ul knew this battle well...

Rom 8:3 For what the Torah could not do by itself, because it lacked the power to make the old nature cooperate, God did by sending his own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one [*but without sin*]. God did this in order to deal with sin, and in so doing he executed the punishment against sin in human nature,

Rom 8:4 so that the just requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us who do not run our lives according to what our old nature wants but according to what the Spirit wants.

Rom 8:5 For those who identify with their old nature set their minds on the things of the old nature, but those who identify with the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Rom 8:6 Having one's mind controlled by the old nature is death, but having one's mind controlled by the Spirit is life and shalom.

Rom 8:7 For the mind controlled by the old nature is hostile to God, because it does not submit itself to God's Torah—indeed, it cannot.

Rom 8:8 Thus, those who identify with their old nature cannot please God.

Rom 8:9 But you, you do not identify with your old nature but with the Spirit—provided the Spirit of God is living inside you, for anyone who doesn't have the Spirit of the Messiah doesn't belong to him.

Rom 8:10 However, if the Messiah is in you, then, on the one hand, the body is dead because of sin; but, on the other hand, the Spirit is giving life because God considers you righteous.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Yeshua from the dead is living in you, then the One who raised the Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

So, when that pesky old nature rears its ugly head and subdues your New Nature, Adonai has provided us a way to Return to Him.

Returning to your true self, that is your New Nature through repentance is what the Shabbat Shuvah, the Sabbath of Return is all about. You do not need to be Jewish to appreciate its importance and recognize its potential positive impact on your life. Yet, by embracing this Jewish mindset, this Jewish thought, you are able to understand the complexity of what is found throughout Scripture and thus apply it to your life. The contrast to what is understood by a majority of believers remains elementary, yet you have embraced graduate level understanding.

Thus, let your education of this day and time comprising a 40 day time frame continue...

Before looking at the action of T'shuvah and repentance, let's establish something foundation, defining what sin is. The definition for sin is actually very simple and of course is found in Scripture, yet not where you might expect to find it. Yochanan (John) provides a definition for us in his first letter...

1Jn 3:1 See what love the Father has lavished on us in letting us be called God's children! For that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it has not known him.

1Jn 3:2 Dear friends, we are God's children now; and it has not yet been made clear what we will become. We do know that when he appears, we will be like him; because we will see him as he really is.

1Jn 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in him continues purifying himself, since God is pure.

1Jn 3:4 Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah—indeed, sin is violation of Torah.

Throughout Deuteronomy Adonai conveys to Moshe for the people of Israel to follow His regulations, laws and ordinances. By **not** doing so, is what sin is, as conveyed by Yochanan.

The 4 Steps of Repentance

T'shuvah is actually a process of self-evaluation and self-improvement. The Rambam counts four primary steps to the *t'shuva* process:

1. Recognize and discontinue the improper action.

If I were to associate a song to this first step it would be “Stop In The Name of Love” That is the love of Adonai. How do we identify these improper actions? Torah

Rom 7:7 Therefore, what are we to say? That the Torah is sinful? Heaven forbid! Rather, the function of the Torah was that without it, I would not have known what sin is. For example, I would not have become conscious of what greed is if the Torah had not said, "Thou shalt not covet."

This is where you have to put on your study hats and search Torah to find if anything you are doing is against Adonai. Keeping in mind, you are not alone in this pursuit. You have Adonai's Torah written on your heart having embraced Yeshua and therefore the promises of the New Covenant. One of those promises being the Ruach Ha Kodesh residing in you.

2. Verbally confess the action, thus giving the action a concrete form in your own mind.

This doesn't have to be done to an individual though it would make you accountable, yet your confession would be to Adonai.

Psa 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away because of my groaning all day long;

Psa 32:4 day and night your hand was heavy on me; the sap in me dried up as in a summer drought. (Selah)

Psa 32:5 When I acknowledged my sin to you, when I stopped concealing my guilt, and said, "I will confess my offenses to Adonai"; then you, you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Selah)

3. Regret the action. Evaluate the negative impact this action may have had on yourself or on others. In other words, weigh the cost of your transgression and the impact it has had on your life and those in your life.

David confesses to Adonai...

Psa 51:4 Wash me completely from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.

Psa 51:5 For I know my crimes, my sin confronts me all the time.

Psa 51:6 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil from your perspective; so that you are right in accusing me and justified in passing sentence.

4. Determine never to repeat the action. This is where the rubber meets the road. Picture a better way to handle it. There are two different types of transgressions: those between a person and God and those between one person and another.

Part of this time between Yom T'ruah and Yom Kippur is to reconcile with anyone you have had issues with. This practice is not foreign or absent within the New Covenant writings...

Mat 5:23 So if you are offering your gift at the Temple altar and you remember there that your brother has something against you,

Mat 5:24 leave your gift where it is by the altar, and go, make peace with your brother. Then come back and offer your gift.

So, these are the steps for T'shuvah, for repenting and returning to Adonai. Likely more involved than you originally thought, yet not unreasonable or impossible to accomplish.

Three Portraits of Grace and Repentance

On ***Shabbat Shuvah*** these three prophetic portions are read...

Hoshea 14:2 – 11

Micah 7:18 – 20

Yoel 2:15 – 27

They are intended to teach us what repentance means and how Adonai shows us grace. Grace is undeserved favor thus making forgiveness of our transgressions a gift.

Do not even think that our repentance makes us ***deserve*** forgiveness.

Hoshea: The Wisdom of Returning:

The last chapter of Hoshea, a Prophet of Israel who is instructed to marry a harlot. What is to transpire within Hoshea's writings as inspired by Adonai is an allusion that we need to pay attention to. His relationship is ultimately a picture of Israel's relationship with Adonai as the last chapter of Hoshea's writings reveal...

Hos 14:2 Return, Isra'el, to Adonai your God, for your guilt has made you stumble.

Hos 14:3 Take words with you, and return to Adonai; say to him, "Forgive all guilt, and accept what is good; we will pay instead of bulls [*the offerings of*] our lips.

Hos 14:4 Ashur will not save us, we will not ride on horses, and we will no longer call what we made with our hands our gods. For it is only in you that the fatherless can find mercy."

Hos 14:5 "I will heal their disloyalty, I will love them freely; for my anger has turned from him.

Hos 14:6 I will be like dew to Isra'el; he will blossom like a lily and strike roots like the L'vanon.

Hos 14:7 His branches will spread out, his beauty be like an olive tree and his fragrance like the L'vanon.

Hos 14:8 Again they will live in his shade and raise grain; they will blossom like a vine, and its aroma will be like the wine of the L'vanon.

Hos 14:9 Efrayim [*will say*], 'What have I to do any more with idols?' And I, I answer and affirm him; I am like a fresh, green cypress tree; your fruitfulness comes from me."

Hos 14:10 Let the wise understand these things, and let the discerning know them. For the ways of Adonai are straight, And the righteous walk in them, but in them sinners stumble.

What can we glean from Hoshea's words?

Hoshea, a prophet to the northern kingdom shortly before Assyria come to destroy it, gave Israel a four-part message:

- **Hosea 14:2-4(1-3)** - Bring words of repentance and return to God, rejecting all idols and reliance on human power.
- **Hosea 14:5-8(4-7)** - God will heal and restore you to a place of love, blessing, and divine protection.
- **Hosea 14:9(8)** - You need God and not idols.
- **Hosea 14:10(9)** - Those who are wise understand the need for repentance and rejection of idols, even in an unwise generation.

Micah: The Miracle of Forgiveness:

Mic 7:18 Who is a God like you, pardoning the sin and overlooking the crimes of the remnant of his heritage? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in grace.

Mic 7:19 He will again have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities. You will throw all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Mic 7:20 You will show truth to Ya'akov and grace to Avraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors since days of long ago.

What can we glean from Micah?

Micah, prophet to the southern kingdom in days of apostasy, gave us instruction about the wonder of God's gracious pardon. His final words as inspired by Adonai conveys to us that Adonai prefers mercy to judgment and easily forgives. Adonai attacks iniquity when we return to him, destroying the record of our judgment. Adonai desires to restore and reconcile, not remember past offenses.

Joel: Weeping Turns to Rejoicing:

Joe 2:15 "Blow the shofar in Tziyon! Proclaim a holy fast, call for a solemn assembly."

Joe 2:16 Gather the people; consecrate the congregation; assemble the leaders; gather the children, even infants sucking at the breast; let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride the bridal chamber.

Joe 2:17 Let the cohanim, who serve Adonai, stand weeping between the vestibule and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, Adonai! Don't expose your heritage to mockery, or make them a byword among the Goyim. Why should the peoples say, 'Where is their God?' "

Joe 2:18 Then Adonai will become jealous for his land and have pity on his people.

Joe 2:19 Here is how Adonai will answer his people: "I will send you grain, wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you; and no longer will I make you a mockery among the Goyim.

Joe 2:20 No, I will take the northerner away, far away from you, and drive him to a land that is waste and barren; with his vanguard toward the eastern sea and his rearguard toward the western sea, his stench and his rottenness will rise, because he has done great things."

Joe 2:21 Don't fear, O soil; be glad! rejoice! for Adonai has done great things.

Joe 2:22 Don't be afraid, wild animals; for the desert pastures are green, the trees are putting out their fruit, the fig tree and vine are giving full yield.

Joe 2:23 Be glad, people of Tziyon! rejoice in Adonai your God! For he is giving you the right amount of rain in the fall, he makes the rain come down for you, the fall and spring rains—this is what he does first.

Joe 2:24 Then the floors will be full of grain and the vats overflow with wine and olive oil.

Joe 2:25 "I will restore to you the years that the locusts ate, the grasshoppers, shearer-worms and cutter-worms, my great army that I sent against you.

Joe 2:26 You will eat until you are satisfied and will praise the name of Adonai your God, who has done with you such wonders. Then my people will never again be shamed.

Joe 2:27 You will know that I am with Isra'el and that I am Adonai your God, and that there is no other. Then my people will never again be shamed.

Yoel, whose era is not known, gave to Israel a message of contrition, deep sorrow over sin, followed by God's fierce love and blessing:

- **Yoel 2:15-17**, Joel calls for a public display of emotional repentance. This repentance is characterized by a gathering of everyone, great and small, and the weeping and intercession of leaders for the people.
- **Yoel 2:18-27**, God's response to this contrition is jealous or fierce love. The idea is that God longs to see his people restored with an emotional fervency. When the people cry out with emotion, God reacts in kind, loving and restoring with zeal. God will restore his people to blessing if repentance is real.

What does this teach us?

Lessons from the Texts:

- **Hosea** emphasizes *sole allegiance* in returning from idols to Adonai where **Yoel** emphasizes *emotional repentance*.
- **Hosea's** emphasis is on *the will* and **Yoel** on *the emotions*, yet **both** are teaching *repentance*.
- Their instructions add to each other, giving us a full picture of repentance as a choice and a deep-felt need.
- **Hosea and Yoel** both speak of *healing and restoration*, but **Micah** emphasizes the *grace* behind the very idea of divine forgiveness.
- In **Hosea** God promises to *turn from anger* and in **Yoel**, Adonai is jealous to *restore his people*, but in **Micah**, Adonai is unique among all the deities of religion for his eagerness to show *devotion and love*.

What does this show us?

God's mercy is greater than his judgment and thus is reflected in His Word through what are identified as the 13 attributes of Adonai.

Exo 34:6 Adonai passed before him and proclaimed: "YUD-HEH-VAV-HEH!!! Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh (יהוה) [Adonai] is God, merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth;

Exo 34:7 showing grace to the thousandth generation, forgiving offenses, crimes and sins; yet not exonerating the guilty, but causing the negative effects of the parents' offenses to be experienced by their children and grandchildren, and even by the third and fourth generations."

This is how His attributes are understood...

On this day, on Shabbat Shuvah, the Orthodox Jew will study these 13 Qualities of God. Let's review them:

1. Adonai of mercy (before a man commits a sin)
2. Adonai of mercy (after a man commits a sin)

Two of the attributes are based on His name being written twice and thus related to the extend of His mercy.

3. Almighty Lord of the universe, Ruler of Nature, and Mankind

4. Full of affectionate sympathy for the suffering and miseries of human frailty
5. Assisting, helping, and consoling the afflicted and raising up the oppressed
6. Long suffering and slow to anger
7. Abundant in goodness i.e. granting His gifts beyond the deserts of man
8. True to Himself and speaking the Truth in love
9. Remembering the good deeds of the ancestors for a thousand generations
10. Bearing with indulgence the failings of Man; and also
11. Man's evil deeds springing from malice and rebellion against God; and
12. Man's shortcomings due to heedlessness and error
13. He will not allow the guilty to pass unpunished but visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him.

As a Messianic Believer, both Jew and Gentile, we too have studied Adonai's attributes on this day not to mention throughout the year. He is revealed to us through our study of Torah. You have studied and seen first hand the complexity of Adonai and yet experienced the simplicity of His Word.

Deu 30:11 For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach.

Deu 30:12 It isn't in the sky, so that you need to ask, 'Who will go up into the sky for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

Deu 30:13 Likewise, it isn't beyond the sea, so that you need to ask, 'Who will cross the sea for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?'

Deu 30:14 On the contrary, the word is very close to you—in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore, you can do it!

I want to close with this excerpt I had read during the week pertaining to an event from 1987, that of the confirmation hearing for Robert Bork, nominated by President Reagan to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court of the United States. The head of the Senate Judiciary Committee who made the following statement is Joe Biden.

In a forecast of what his own judiciary would look like, Biden opposed Bork not because he lacked the legal credentials to be on the court – Bork was considered one of the leading legal scholars in the country – but because Bork didn't conform to Biden's view of a good judge as a left wing legislator from the bench.

Biden lectured Bork: "Will we retreat from our tradition of progress or will we move forward, continuing to expand and envelop the rights of individuals in a changing world which is bound to have an impact upon those individuals' sense of who they are and what they can do?...In passing on this nomination to the Supreme Court, we must also pass judgment on whether or not your particular philosophy is an appropriate one at this time in history."

Bork parried that judges aren't supposed to interpret the law in light of the current political zeitgeist but according to its original meaning.

"If a judge abandons intention as his guide, there is no law available to him, and he begins to legislate a social agenda for the American people."

"That goes well beyond his legitimate powers. He or she then diminishes liberty instead of enhancing it. The truth

is that the judge who looks outside the Constitution always looks inside himself and nowhere else.”

<https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/517743-joe-biden-the-father-of-borking>

Now...Substitute Torah for Constitution and person for judge in the bolded excerpt above.

To look inside one's self and nowhere else ultimately leads us to following another set of standards, another Torah for which the passage in Romans 8 for which I shared earlier reveals the distinct contrast...

Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua.

Rom 8:2 Why? Because the Torah of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has set me free from the "Torah" of sin and death.