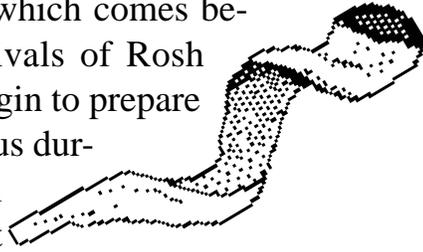


# תְּשׁוּבָה

## *Teshuvah - Repentance, Lesson 1*

During the month of Ellul, the month which comes before the month of Tishri and the Fall festivals of Rosh HaShannah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot, we begin to prepare ourselves for what HaShem intends to teach us during the festivals. During the month of Ellul the shofar may be blown as a reminder that



G-d is calling us all back to Him. The Hebrew word which means to “turn back” or “to return” is תְּשׁוּבָה, *teshuvah* from the word שׁוּב, *shuv*, “to turn” or “to return.” Many times in our English Bibles this word and the words which come from this word are translated “repent” or “repentance.” From this we learn that “repentance” is required whenever I act in a way that I know G-d does not like. When I act against what G-d has said, it is as though I have turned my face away from Him and have gone in my own direction. When my heart is sad because of what I have done, and I turn around again, face G-d (so to speak), and ask for His forgiveness, then I’m doing “repentance” or *teshuva*.

The same is true when I do something wrong against someone else. Usually, when we sin against another person, we turn away from that person and don’t want to talk with them or be with them. When I turn back toward that person and ask them to forgive me, I’m doing “repentance” or *teshuva*. G-d teaches us that when we treat people in a wrong way, we are doing the same thing against G-d as well. That’s because G-d created us all in His image, so that what we do to each other affects G-d as well.

We may think to ourselves, “I haven’t walked away from G-d so I don’t need to return! I’ve been with G-d all year long.” Or, “I’ve not done anything wrong toward another person, so I don’t need to do *teshuva*.” That is one of the reasons that G-d asks us to listen carefully to the blowing of the shofar. When we hear the longing, groaning, moaning sounds of the ram’s horn, it helps to remind us of things we’ve done that we may even have forgotten about. And it helps us understand that our heavenly Father groans when we sin against each other, or when we fail to follow His loving instructions.

When you hear the shofar, remember: it’s your heavenly Father calling you back to the place of close friendship with Him. But you will need to ask Him to forgive you of the sins you have done, and He will require you to also ask forgiveness of those people you have hurt by your selfishness.