T'SHUVAH REFLECTION RHD2 5783
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TEMPLE SHOLOM

Maimonides MT Chap 1:
"If a person transgresses any of the mitzvot of the Torah, whether a positive command or a negative command - whether willingly or inadvertently - when he repents, and returns from his sin, he must confess before God, blessed be He, as [Numbers 5:6-7] states: "If a man or a woman commit any of the sins of man... they must confess the sin that they committed."
This refers to a verbal confession. This confession is a positive command. How does one confess: He states: "I implore You, God, I sinned, I transgressed, I committed iniquity before You by doing the following. Behold, I regret and am embarrassed for my deeds. I promise never to repeat this act again."

How do you fulfill the responsibility of T'shuvah you must change behavior but why then does RamBam say you must confess? Why do we need confession as part of T'shuvah?

The purpose of the vidui/confession is to understand that many people do the act of t'shuvah without feeling bad about it. Indeed, we are taught that it is not our fault, and we are taught not to feel bad about it. Tshuvah means looking at the status quo and looking at where we are in our lives, the purpose of the vidui is to break that, to not be content with just where we are, who we are.

The shofar call is to wake up those of us who have fallen asleep at the wheel of our lives, focussing only on our desire to maintain the status quo. We can be better than this. We could be more than this. Rambam is saying that the worst thing for a person is to see the world as stable. Growth and t'shuvah are founded on instability. Your whole life is standing on the brink right now.

I know this is not the way we want to live, in instability, of course we do need some stability, but we need a measure of danger that is not the status quo. When someone asks you what are the foundational moments of your life, the things that defined you and made you who you are it will be more often than not the difficulties that defined you. Protecting yourself from difficulty will find us guaranteeing mediocrity. We spend all of our lives making sure that nothing will endanger our kids and then - just want my child to be happy. But then they confront adversity and we marvel at their accomplishment and strength. Or they fail and they learn from that too. We could spend our lives trying to reclaim stability, the status quo, or we could, for this moment, take the opportunity to ask is this all and who we want to be? If suffering befalls you dont waste it not solving the suffering, but learning from it and growing from it

The greatest gift that God has given us is Torah - what should be more to you - honey on your lips because if you keep it everything will go well with you. But the rabbis says it will come with suffering

There is no greatness without t'shuvah. You can see your instability and suffering and go running to God or your accountant to complain how unfair it all is, how unwarranted, how much you deserve to have the status quo restored. Or you can say I can grow from this, I can learn from this. To use a computer programer's frame of reference, our failures are not a bug in the system, they are a feature.