

COME HOME

Lyrics and music by ISHAY RIBO



BACKGROUND

Ishay Ribo was born in France, and moved with his family to Israel when he was eight years old. After a while the family became more Orthodox, and moved to a Haredi neighborhood in Jerusalem. Ribo served in the Army unit for Haredi boys, and began performing and working on his first album while still serving. After the army he married, and began studying at Midreshet Ziv - a Kollel (yeshiva for married men) for musicians that had opened in 2013. His first and second albums were warmly received in the religious community, but it would be fair

to say that it was not until 2017 that he began to break through beyond the religious, and into the general public. In 2018 his album "Grey Area", containing several hits such as this song "Come Home", and "One and Forever" went platinum. His fame and success has not led to a softening of Ribo's religious message. His work has become even deeper entwined with religious faith and text. His latest song addresses the Coronavirus in religious terms, translating "Corona" as the divine Crown.

The time has come to wake up¹
To leave everything and to overcome
To come home, not to look for anywhere else

The time has come to change
Even if we missed a few stops
We can get off, there is a train back to the neighborhood
Everything is possible if we wish for it
The seeker will always find²
Even if he is somewhere out there on the edge
The doors of heaven are never locked

Higi'a hazman l'hit'orer
La'azov hakol l'hitgaber
Lashuv habayta, lo l'chapess makom acher

Higi'a hazman l'hishtanot
Gam im fisfasnu tachanah
Efshar laredet, yesh rakevet chazara lash'chunot
Hakol efshar rak im nirtzeh
Hamechapess tamid motzeh
Gam im hu nimtzah ey sham harchek bakatzeh
Dlatot shamayim lo ninalu

הגיע הזמן להתעורר
לעזוב הכל להתגבר
לשוב הביתה, לא לחפש מקום אחר

הגיע הזמן להשתנות
גם אם פספסנו תחנות
אפשר לרדת, יש רכבת חזרה לשכונות
הכל אפשר רק אם נרצה
המחפש תמיד מוצא
גם אם הוא נמצא אי שם הרחוק בקצה
דלתות שמים לא ננעלו



When the child cries for help
So even the Father in heaven arrives

Even when we've done something bad
He pardons and forgives, pardons and forgives
Holds out his hand in help
And in his compassion gives the strength to repair
And to return to him

The time has come to regret
If you're fleeing, then from sin
If you're taking, then take in order to give
And this is the time to come closer
Not to fear the pain
And if you're giving, then with all your heart
Everything is possible if we so wish it
The seeker will always find

Even if he is somewhere out there on the edge
The doors of heaven are never locked

When the child cries for help
So the Father in heaven arrives even
Even when we've done something bad
He pardons and forgives, pardons and forgives
Holds out his hand in help³
And in his compassion gives the strength to repair
And to return to him
Even when we've done something bad
He pardons and forgives, pardons and forgives
Holds out his hand in help
And in his compassion gives the strength to repair
And to return to him

*K'shehaben koreh hatzilu
Az abba shebashamayim magi'a afilu*

*Afilu she'asinu mashehu ra
Hu mochel v'sole'ach, mochel v'sole'ach
Moshit yado la'ezra
V'noten b'rachamav et hako'ach l'taken
V'lashuv elav*

*Higi'a hazman l'hitcharet
Im kvar livro'ach az mehachet
Im kvar lakachat, az lakachat bishvil latet
V'zeh hazman l'hitkarev
Lo l'fached mehake'ev
V'im latet az kvar latet mikol halev
Hakol efshar rak im nirtzeh
Hamechapess tamid motzeh*

*Gam im hu nimtzah ey sham harchek bakatzeh
Dlatot shamayim lo ninalu*

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כְּשֶׁהֵבֵן קוֹרָא הַצִּילוּ
אֶז אָבָא שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם מַגִּיעַ אֶפְלוּ

אֶפְלוּ שְׁעַשִּׂינוּ מַשְׁהוּ רַע
הוּא מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ, מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ
מוֹשִׁיט יָדוֹ לְעֶזְרָה
וְנוֹתֵן בְּרַחְמָיו אֶת הַכֹּחַ לְתַקּוּ
וְלָשׁוּב אֵלָיו

הַגִּיעַ הַזְּמַן לְהִתְחַרֵּת
אִם כָּבָר לְבָרַח אֶז מֵהַחֶטָּא
אִם כָּבָר לְקַחַת, אֶז לְקַחַת בְּשִׁבִיל לְתַת
וְזֶה הַזְּמַן לְהִתְקַרֵּב
לֹא לְפַחַד מֵהַכָּאֵב
וְאִם לְתַת אֶז כָּבָר לְתַת מִכָּל הַלֵּב
הַכֹּל אֶפְשָׁר רַק אִם נִרְצֶה
הַמְּחַפֵּשׁ תָּמִיד מוֹצֵא

גַּם אִם הוּא נִמְצָא אִי שָׁם הִרְחַק בְּקֶצֶה
דְּלַתוֹת שְׁמַיִם לֹא נִנְעָלוּ

כְּשֶׁהֵבֵן קוֹרָא הַצִּילוּ
אֶז אָבָא שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם מַגִּיעַ אֶפְלוּ
אֶפְלוּ שְׁעַשִּׂינוּ מַשְׁהוּ רַע
הוּא מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ, מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ
מוֹשִׁיט יָדוֹ לְעֶזְרָה
וְנוֹתֵן בְּרַחְמָיו אֶת הַכֹּחַ לְתַקּוּ
וְלָשׁוּב אֵלָיו
אֶפְלוּ שְׁעַשִּׂינוּ מַשְׁהוּ רַע
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וְנוֹתֵן בְּרַחְמָיו אֶת הַכֹּחַ לְתַקּוּ
וְלָשׁוּב אֵלָיו



The time has come to wake up
To leave everything and to overcome
To come home

⋮ Higi'a hazman l'hit'orer
⋮ La'azov hakol l'hitgaber
⋮ Lashuv habayta, lo l'chapess makom acher

⋮ הגיע הזמן להתעורר
⋮ לעזוב הכל להתגבר
⋮ לשוב הביתה

Teshuva - תְּשׁוּבָה - is a powerful concept in Judaism. Literally it can mean both "Answer" and "Return", yet it is primarily used in the sense of "Repentance". Thus, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we repent - the Hebrew term is Teshuvah. This is also the term often used for one who becomes more Orthodox: They are known to have "returned in Teshuva - תְּשׁוּבָה בְּתְשׁוּבָה". Since there is this double-play between "return"

and "answer", so those who leave Orthodoxy and become more secular are said to have "returned in Question - חֲזָרוּ בְּשִׂאלָה". This is a song about Teshuva that plays with non-Rabbinic language and metaphor (e.g. the train to the suburbs) but also touches on certain phrases that evoke the traditional liturgy, as well as Talmudic concepts and themes on repentance.

FOOTNOTES

1. הגיע הזמן להתעורר
Every morning for 40 days leading up to Yom Kippur, Sephardi Orthodox Jews will begin each day with Selichot - a cleansing process of song and prayer. In this song Ribo draws on one of the piyyutim (hymns) he would have heard every morning for 40 days every year: *Ben Adam Mah Lecha Nirdam?* מַה-לָּךְ נִרְדָּם בְּן אָדָם

This piyyut is one of the most well-known of the Selichot piyyutim, and is sung towards the end of the Selichot service. It was written by R. Yehuda Even Balam, who lived in Seville in the 11th century. It is a central part of the Sephardi Selichot, drawing on the call of the captain of Jonah's boat (Jonah 1:6). As the ship is about to sink under the assault of the Divinely-sent storm, the captain wakes Jonah up with the words:

"How can you be sleeping so soundly! Up, call upon your god! Perhaps the god will be kind to us and we will not perish."
מַה-לָּךְ נִרְדָּם קוּם קְרָא אֶל-אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֹלֵי יִתְעַשֶׂת הָאֱלֹהִים לָנוּ וְלֹא נֵאָכֵד:

This motif, of waking from sleep, is a staple of Teshuva discourse and prayer. Maimonides, in exploring the Laws of Repentance in Mishneh Torah, explains how the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh HaShanah is a symbolic form of "waking up" the soul: Notwithstanding that the blowing of the ram's horn trumpet on Rosh ha-Shanah is a Scriptural statute, its blast is symbolic, as if saying: **"Ye that sleep, bestir yourselves from your sleep, and ye slumbering, emerge from your slumber, examine your conduct, turn in repentance, and remember your Creator!** They that forget the truth because of the vanities of the times, who err all of their



years by pursuing vanity and idleness, which are of neither benefit nor of salvation, care for your souls, improve your ways and your tendencies, let each one of you abandon his evil path and his thought which is not pure!

אָף עַל פִּי שְׁתַּקִּיעַת שׁוֹפֵר בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה גְּזֵרַת הַכְּתוּב רָמַז יֵשׁ בּוֹ כְּלוֹמֵר עוֹרוּ יִשְׁנִים מִשְׁנֵתְכֶם וְנִרְדְּמִים הֶקִּיצוּ מִתְרַדְּמֵתְכֶם וְחַפְּשׁוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂיכֶם וְחִזְרוּ בְּתִשׁוּבָה וְזָכְרוּ בּוֹרְאֵכֶם. אֵלֹהֵי הַשׁוֹכְחִים אֶת הָאֲמֶת בְּהַבְלֵי הַזְּמַן וְשׁוֹגִים כָּל שְׁנֵתָם בְּהַבֵּל וְרִיק אֲשֶׁר לֹא יוֹעִיל וְלֹא יִצִּיל, הַבֵּיטוּ לְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם וְהִיטִיבוּ דַרְכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם וְיַעֲזֹב כָּל אֶחָד מִכֶּם דַּרְכּוֹ הָרָעָה וּמַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא טוֹבָה...:

2. הַמַּחְפֵּשׁ תְּמִיד מוֹצֵא גַּם אִם הוּא נִמְצָא אִי שָׁם הִרְחַק בְּקִצָּה

In the book of Deuteronomy Chapter 4, the text talks of a cycle of sin-exile, and in the act of seeking God one finds him:

²⁹ But if you search from there for the Lord your God, you will find Him, if only you seek Him with all your heart and soul—
כֹּט וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ וּמְצֵאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ:

Later on, in Deuteronomy Chapter 30:2-4 we find an echo of Ribo's reference to "somewhere out there on the edge":

וְשָׁבַת עַד־ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ...
וְקִבְּצָה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפְיָצָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ שָׁמָּה:
אִם־יְהִיֶּה נִדְחָה בְּקִצָּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצָה ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ:

And you **return to the LORD your God...**
He will bring you together again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

Even if your **outcasts are at the ends of the world**, from there the LORD your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you.

3. מוֹשִׁיט יְדוֹ לְעִזָּרָה וְנוֹתֵן בְּרַחֲמָיו אֶת הַכֹּחַ לְתַקּוּוֹ

All ideas of repentance include the central idea that God will help the repentant return.

In Talmud Bavli Yoma 38b-39a Resh Lakish (himself a former bandit), expounds on notions of free will, sin, and repentance. In his reading of the line in Proverbs 3:34, "If it concerns the scorers, He scorns them, but to the humble He gives grace", Resh Lakish expounds on how God gives us free will to sin, but is actively helpful to those who wish to return to the righteous path:

אמר ריש לקיש מאי דכתיב (משלי ג, לד) אם ללצים הוא יליץ ולענוים יתן חן בא לטמא פותחין לו בא לטהר מסייעין אותו תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל משל לאדם שהיה מוכר נפט ואפרסמון

Reish Lakish said: What [is the meaning of that] which is written: "If it concerns the scorers, He scorns them, but to the humble He gives grace" (Proverbs 3:34)? If one comes to impurify, they open [before him the opportunity to exercise his free will and do as he pleases.] If one comes to purify, they assist him. In the school of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught [with regard to this verse]: This is comparable to the case of a man who was selling both crude naphtha [neft], [whose odor is vile,] and balsam, [whose fragrance is pleasant.]



בא למדוד נפט אומר לו מדוד אתה לעצמך בא למדוד אפרסמון אומר לו המתן לי
עד שאמדוד עמך כדי שנתבסם אני ואתה

In the case of one who comes to measure and purchase naphtha, the merchant says to him: Measure it for yourself, [as I prefer to keep my distance from the foul odor]. With regard to one who comes to measure and purchase balsam, the merchant says to him: Wait for me until I can measure it with you, so that you and I will both be perfumed. [Similarly, **with regard to sin God merely provides an opening, whereas with regard to mitzvot God assists the individual in their performance.**]

THEMES

- # Sin
- # Forgiveness
- # Redemption
- # Calling in vs calling out
- # Home
- # Comfort
- # The Joys of Judaism not the oys

AND NOW YOU

There is a delightful, almost heavenly lightness to the song's message and feel. Repentance is experienced as logical, joyful, and easy.

- Does this tend to be your experience if you ever choose to gain intimacy with the spiritual religious aspects of Judaism? What kind of song would you write or sing?

Beyond the religious world, the concept of wrong-doing or sin, would seem to be alive and well.

- What would be the major "sins" in the world today?
- If one were to repent for having committed these contemporary "sins", is the process as smooth as Ribo's song suggests that God's forgiveness is? How is the repentant sinner received by society?

For Ribo, the image of "coming/returning home" is to come home to oneself and to come home to a rich relationship with God. "Coming home" is a warm, welcoming, natural idea.

- What does "coming home" conjure for you? Is the image of "coming home" as evocative for you as it is for Ribo? What other images might you draw on to suggest such comfort and security?