ROSH CHODESH ELUL: The process of Teshuba

Today is the 1st day of the month of Elul (Rosh Chodesh Elul), 5770

Rabbi Yehoshua en Korcha said that after receiving the 10 commandments Moshe Rabbenu stayed in Mount Sinai for 40 days. There, God taught him the Oral Law: the meaning and performance of all the 613 Miztvot. At the end of 40 days Moshe went down and encountered the people of Israel worshiping the golden calf. At the sight of such offense to God, Moshe broke the tablets containing the 10 commandments. It was the 17th of Tamuz.

A few weeks later, in the beginning of the month of Elul, God told Moshe to ascend once again Mount Sinai where he stayed again for 40 days. What did Moshe do during those 40 days? He begged God Almighty to forgive Israel for their terrible sin. Moshe argued with God and advocated for the Jewish people, invoking the merit of their ancestors Abraham Ytzchak and Yaakob.

At the end of the forty days, God finally absolved the people of Israel. That day, the 10th of Tishri, is Yom Kippur , the day of forgiveness.

In remembrance of those 40 days during which Moshe Rabbenu begged God to pardon Israel, we dedicate 40 days to ask God for our own forgiveness. This process of personal repentance –Teshuva- begins tomorrow and ends on Yom Kippur.

Tomorrow morning BH, we start saying Selichot, the prayers that inspire us to reflect on our lives and embark on the

process of repentance.