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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON YOM KIPUR - 5765

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Sept. 23, 2004  
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RABBI HERSHEL SCHACHTER  
YOM KIPPUR, THE YOM TOV  
OF TORAH SHEBEAL PEH  
The Talmud tells us (Taanis 30b)  
that every year on Yom Kippur we  
commemorate the fact that on that

very day, so many years ago, Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Mt. Sinai with the second set of luchos. But we also know that every year on Shavuos, both in the davening and in the Kiddush, we identify that holiday as "z'man mattan Toraseinu." Why do we need two holidays for the sake of commemorating the same thing - our receiving of the Torah? R. Betzalel Hakohein (the dayan of Vilna) suggested that perhaps on Shavuos we commemorate our receiving on the Torah Shebiksav, while on Yom Kippur we commemorate our receiving of the Torah Shebeal Peh (see Nefesh Horav, pg 293.)

Rav Soloveitchik explained that this suggestion is not merely an arbitrary "teratz", that there are two holidays because there are two parts of the Torah, but is really a "milsa debetaama." In the essays of the Beis Halevi a thesis is developed based on many passages in the Talmud, the Midrash, and the Zohar, that on Shavuos, when Hashem proclaimed the aseres hadibros, the plan was to give Moshe Rabbeinu the luchos which would contain all of the Torah on them. According to this original plan, there would be no need for any Torah Shebeal Peh. Everything would appear on the luchos. After the Jewish people sinned with the eigel, they were weakened to the point that now it would be possible for other nations to dominate over them. Those other nations might also possibly dominate over the Torah as well, and claim that they are "the chosen nation", since they have the Torah. For this reason, G-d instituted the Torah Shebeal Peh, which would only remain transmitted among the Jews. In this way, the Jewish people would maintain their uniqueness and their chosen-ness, by virtue of the fact that they alone have this oral transmission of this Torah Shebeal Peh. And this is what the prophet Hoshea (8:12) was referring to: "If I were to have the entire Torah committed to writing, then the enemies of the Jewish people would be able to claim that the Jews were 'strangers', that they had lost their status as 'am hanivchar'; and that that they (the enemies) were now the chosen people!" (see Gittin 60b).

So the Rov explained, that on Shavuos, when we commemorate maamad Har Sinai, and our receiving of the Torah the first time, this really relates only to our receiving the written Torah; because according to the first plan, there wasn't going to be any oral Torah at all. Following plan #1, there wouldn't have been any need for it. However by the time Moshe Rabbeinu came down on Yom Kippur with the second set of luchos, the entire plan had changed, and that Yom Kippur was the beginning of the Torah Shebeal Peh (see Yemei Zikaron, p. 245.)

In that same prophecy of Hoshea (8:10) the navi encourages the Jewish people that "if they will emphasize the study of Mishna (i.e., Torah Shebeal Peh), G-d will redeem them" (see Midrash Yayikra Rabba 7:3.) The rabbis had a tradition that G-d who instilled within all of us a yetzar horah, also gave us the Torah to serve as an antidote to that yetzer horah (Kiddushin 30b). Until the period of the Anshei Keneses Hagdolah, the dominant yetzer horah was for avodah zarah (see Sanhedrin 102b), and apparently the main antidote for that yetzer horah was the study of Torah Shebiksav. After the Anshei Keneses Hagdolah succeeded in abolishing the yetzer horah for avodah zarah through their tefillos (Yoma 69b), a

new yetzer horah was instilled within us for "minus" and "apikursus." The main antidote for that yetzer is to emphasize the study of Torah Shebeal Peh (see B'ikvei Hatzon p. 139.) The "Seder Olam" records that the death of Chagai, Zecharia, and Malachi was the end of the period of the prophets, (i.e. the end of the period of the Torah Shebiksav.) From that point we were instructed to bend our ears and pay good attention to what the rabbis have to tell us (i.e., the Torah Shebeal Peh.) The navi Hoshea was alluding to our period of history when he spoke of emphasizing the study of Mishna and Torah Shebeal Peh.

Regarding Torah Shebeal Peh, the key word is "mesorah." The attitudes and the style of thinking must be transmitted from rebbe to talmid. The opening mishna in Avos tells us that Moshe received the Torah from G-d at Mt. Sinai, and transmitted it (messara) to Joshua; and each succeeding generation transmitted the Torah Shebeal Peh to the next generation. There can not be Torah Shebeal Peh without "mesorah." One lacking such a mesorah can not sit down with a sefer of mishnayos or gemorrah and come up with some new ideas and claim that this is in the spirit of the Torah Shebeal Peh. Strictly speaking, there is no text to Torah Shebeal Peh. It is a system of ideas and attitudes giving an approach which was intended to be transmitted orally - along with the full depth and flavor of meaning and understanding of those attitudes and ideas. At one point in history, the Rabbis were afraid that due to the many persecutions and exiles, much of the oral Torah would be forgotten, so they felt compelled to preserve it by writing it down. But that text can not really stand alone. It requires a strong mesorah to understand what the text (of the Talmud) is driving at. The mesorah did not end when R. Yehuda Hanasi edited the mishna; nor did it end when Ravina and Rav Ashi edited the gemorrah. The mesorah has extended to our generation, and will continue to be transmitted on.

From the very beginning and throughout the entire period of the second temple, there were groups who challenged the mesorah of the Oral Torah. In later years there were Karaites, and yet later - the Haskalah movement. As we say in the Haggadah, "bechol dor vodor, omdim aleinu lechalosienu." The navi Hoshea has warned us that in our period of history, in order to maintain our identity and not get washed away in assimilation, we must emphasize mesorah of the Oral Torah.

Often there are mesorahs which we find difficult to understand, or difficult to swallow. Parts of the Torah Shebeal Peh seem not to be politically correct. Rav Soloveitchik said over a homiletic interpretation of the passage in the gemorrah (Menachos 29b), that Rabbi Akiva, rather than be apologetic, would be more meticulous and place extra emphasis on all of those halachos where the enemies of Torah had thrown thorns. Rather than discard anything that at first glance we are uncomfortable with, we must preserve our mesorah, and try to develop a deeper insight into what it represents. The superficial mind will often misunderstand Torah, and cast away very precious traditions.

This added theme of Yom Kippur as being the day to commemorate the start of the Torah Shebeal Peh was especially obvious during the period of the Second Temple. Every Yom Kippur, the rabbis would make the Kohein Gadol swear that he would not deviate from the oral tradition in doing the avodah.

Many years later, the Orthodox Jewish community of Alexandria would have an annual march - on Yom Kippur - to declare that they subscribed to the Torah Shebeal Peh. Rav Soloveitchik felt that our practice to recite the lengthy seder ho'avodah in chazoras hashatz of mussaf is probably also for the same purpose - to reaffirm our commitment to the mesorah and the Torah Shebeal Peh (see Lustiger, "Before Hashem you Shall be Purified, p. 144.)

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RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

TEFILLA OF YOMIM NORAIM: TEXTS, TIMES, & TUNES

The preferred time for selichot is between midnight (chatzot) and dawn (alot hashachar). Selichot may be said before shacharit, even after sunrise, but not at night before chatzot. If necessary, selichot may be recited before or right after mincha. In most shuls, selichot are said before shacharit and invariably end (and usually begin) after dawn. In such shuls tachanun and all that follows can be omitted on Erev Rosh HaShana.

It is proper to pause slightly between b'sheim and Hashem. The words vayaavor-vayikra should be said by the tzibbur and then, aloud, by the chazzan followed by the thirteen middot which are the centerpiece of the selichot.

Mussaf on Rosh HaShana should extend beyond midday (chatzot). In most shuls this is done even when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbat.

The shul's customs regarding piyutim and nigunim must be preserved. Changes may confuse the congregants and are considered a serious offence. The traditional nigunim for Borchu, Kaddish, and Kedusha should be used.

Rav Soloveitchik zt'l explained that the tenth pasuk of Malchuyot-Shema Yisrael- essentially belongs to the subsequent bracha. To demonstrate this, the chazzan should conclude the paragraph with the traditional nigun, followed by the tzibbur's nigun between paragraphs., before Shema and should not pause between Shema Yisrael and the bracha.

The Rav zt'l questioned the pasuk, "zecher assa" which does not reflect the theme of Zichronot, namely that G-d remembers. He recommended that the two pesukim- zecher, teref...yizkor (Tehillim 111:4-5) be combined in one veneemar and that another pasuk be added. In our shul, we add "zachor leolam berito" (Tehillim 105:8).

In Shofarot, the Rav zt'l noted that there are ten pesukim, without Tehillim 150, which, therefore, must be understood as a special shira recited when one is lifnei Hashem. In our shul, this perek is sung with a nigun reflecting this idea.

During Aseret Yemei Teshuva, most siddurim and machzorim conclude Besefer Chayim with oseh hashalom. The Rav zt'l was strongly opposed to this change.

The standard text of Kol Nidre refers to vows which were pronounced next year. The verbs (dindarna, etc) can and should be modified slightly to reflect future tense.

Most machzorim omit selichot from shacharit, mussaf, and mincha on Yom Kippur. The Rav zt'l, as the Aruch Hashulchan before him, bemoaned this omission and insisted that selichot be said in chazarat hashatz before zachor rachamecha (in yaaleh veyavo, in mussaf after the avodah). In our shul, a special booklet is distributed containing selichot collected from various machzorim, and the thirteen middot which are said five times for each tefilla.

The avodah is a critical component of chazarat hashatz of mussaf. As such, the Rav zt'l ruled that it must be said aloud by the chazzan. In our shul, the chazan begins with altzu trom and continues until vekidushim asara.

The Chaye Adam notes many errors in the nusach ashkenaz seder avodah. In our shul, we say vekach haya moneh four times instead of two. We reverse the order of the four and seven sprinklings of dam on the mizbach hapenimi, and the order of the second linen dressing and washing of the Kohen Gadol. The other "errors" of the Chaye Adam can be justified.

The starting time for mincha and neila should be determined based on past experience, before Yom Kippur. The phrase hashemesh yavo veyifne must be said before sunset. In this way, neila can be said with proper kavana and still end on time.

<http://www.koltorah.org/ravj/artificialfeeding.htm>

From Parshat Haazinu/Yom HaKippurim Vol.10 No.5 8 Tishrei 5761  
October 7, 2000

#### ARTIFICIAL FEEDING ON YOM HAKIPPURIM

BY RABBI HOWARD JACHTER

Introduction One of the most difficult decisions a Rabbi must make is whether a sick individual may eat on Yom HaKippurim due to medical concerns. Nevertheless, Rabbis do not recommend intravenous feeding or any other form of artificial feeding to sick people to avoid the necessity to eat on Yom HaKippurim. In this essay, we will explore why Rabbis do not make such a recommendation. The essay will be based on a discussion of this issue by Rav J. David Bleich that appears in his work *Contemporary Halachic Problems* 3:129-140.

The Suggestion Many have questioned great Rabbinical authorities whether one must attach an IV to a sick individual to avoid the need to eat on Yom HaKippurim. They argue that although a sick person is excused from fasting, it is Halachically desirable to put him into the position of being obligated to perform Mitzvot (see *Tosafot Pesachim* 113b s.v. V'ein). The Gemara explains that Moshe Rabbeinu craved to enter Eretz Yisrael, in order to obligate himself to observe the Mitzvot *Hateluyot Baaretz* (Mitzvot that are performed only in the Land of Israel). Men wear a four-cornered garment in order to obligate themselves to wear *Tzitzit*. Similarly, one might think that a sick individual should attach himself to an IV to enable himself to fast on Yom HaKippurim.

Moreover, one should try to make advance preparations to avoid having to violate the Torah in order to preserve life. For example, the Mishna *Berura* (330:1) cites the *Sefer Chassidim*, which says that a woman in her ninth month of pregnancy should prepare on Friday whatever might be necessary for her in the event that she begins labor on Shabbat. The Rama (*Orach Chaim* 328:12) rules that, if possible (i.e. it will cause no delay and danger), one should ask a non-Jew to do the work necessary for a dangerously ill person or perform the action in an unusual way. For example, if one must call for emergency services on Shabbat, one should do so in an unusual manner.

*Artificial Feeding on Yom HaKippurim - Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski's Ruling* An individual suggested to Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski (*Teshuvot Achiezer* 3:61) that even artificial feeding on Yom HaKippurim should be forbidden because it satisfies the patient's hunger. The questioner noted that the volume of food and drink necessary to incur punishment on Yom HaKippurim is determined by the amount of food that satiates an individual and not by what otherwise constitutes a formal "act of eating" by Halachic standards (*Yoma* 79a). The questioner thus concluded that the prohibition on Yom HaKippurim essentially is to satisfy one's hunger or thirst.

Rav Chaim Ozer responded that nonetheless Halacha defines only oral ingestion as eating. He cites the Gemara's discussion (*Yoma* 74b) of the source of the assumption that when the Torah commands us to "afflict ourselves on Yom HaKippurim" it refers to refraining from food and drink. The Gemara refers to the verse (*Devarim* 8:3) that states that first Hashem afflicted us and then he fed us the manna. We see that the term "affliction" as used in the Torah refers to not eating or drinking. Rav Chaim Ozer argues that since the Torah records that Hashem fed us the manna to satisfy our hunger, we see that only oral ingestion of food satisfies hunger. Thus, Halacha defines one as afflicting himself if he does not ingest food or drink orally. Indeed, people do not find artificial feeding particularly satisfying.

*Rav Moshe Shternbuch's Approach* Rav Moshe Shternbuch (*Moadim U'zmanim* 1:60) writes that Halacha does not require one to engage in extraordinary means to enable oneself to fast on Yom HaKippurim. He notes that the Gemara and *Shulchan Aruch* make no mention of a requirement for a sick individual who must eat on Yom HaKippurim to eat very bitter food instead of regular food. Although eating very bitter

food on Yom HaKippurim is only rabbinically forbidden, Chazal apparently felt that eating bitter food instead of conventional food is an extraordinary step that is not required to avoid the necessity to eat on Yom HaKippurim.

*Support for Rav Shternbuch's Approach* Although *Teshuvot Binyan Tzion* (35) recommends that a very sick person eat very bitter food instead of regular food on Yom HaKippurim, Rav Shternbuch's approach appears to be accepted among rabbinical authorities. We will cite a number of rulings of various rabbinical authorities in a variety of areas to demonstrate this point.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Teshuvot Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah* 2:74) writes that one is not obligated to induce labor early in the week in order to avoid giving birth on Shabbat. Rav Moshe writes a general statement "that one is not obligated to utilize *Tachbulot* (extraordinary means) in order to have to avoid violation of Shabbat." Parenthetically, Rav Moshe strongly opposes inducing labor except in the case of an emergency. The consensus agrees with Rav Feinstein about this point (see *Nishmat Avraham* 2:105).

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in *Nishmat Avraham* 4:187) rules that if a man is diagnosed with cancer he is not obligated to bank his sperm so that he can have children after chemotherapy treatment. Rabbis debate whether he is permitted to do so if he wants to, but Rav Auerbach feels that he certainly is not obligated to do so, even if he is married. For further discussion of this issue see Rav Eliyahu Bakshi Doron, *Teshuvot Binyan Av* 2:60.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Teshuvot Minchat Shlomo* 1:7) also rules that one is not obligated to engage in heroic measures to avoid working on Shabbat to save lives. He presents numerous examples of this principle. One is not required to wake his neighbor in the middle of the night in order to avoid the need to turn on a light for a dangerously ill individual. One is not required to summon a neighbor to drive a dangerously ill individual to a hospital to avoid having to telephone for an ambulance. Rav Shlomo Zalman cites as a precedent the ruling of the Rama (*Yoreh Deah* 374:2) that a Kohen is not required to hire someone to bury a *Meit Mitzva* (a dead person who has no one to bury him) instead of the Kohen burying him.

Accordingly, Halachic authorities do not require a dangerously ill person to take heroic measures to avoid eating on Yom HaKippurim.

*Rav Moshe Feinstein's Approach* Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Teshuvot Igrot Moshe* 3:90) presents an intriguing approach to this issue. He suggests that it may be forbidden for one to attach himself to an IV to avoid having to eat on Yom HaKippurim. He notes that the Gemara (*Bava Kama* 85a) states that Hashem sanctioned doctors to heal. We see that employing medical procedures is not a human right; rather, it is permitted only because of Hashem's permission. Rav Moshe argues that it is possible that the Divine sanction is limited to resolving medical problems and does not extend to utilizing medical procedures to enable people to fast.

Other rabbinical authorities that address this issue do not mention this concern. Indeed, we commonly engage in medical procedures for Halachic purposes, such as drawing blood to take a bilirubin count to determine if a *Brit Mila* can be performed. Indeed, Rav Soloveitchik did not agree with Rav Moshe's suggestion, as Rav Soloveitchik was fed by IV on Yom HaKippurim when he was an elderly man. Rav Soloveitchik explained to his student-assistants that one is not required to attach himself to an IV if he must eat on Yom HaKippurim. However, The Rav found it profoundly traumatizing to eat on Yom HaKippurim, and artificial feeding was the only viable option for him.

*Conclusion* Virtually all Rabbinical authorities agree that one is not required to attach himself to an IV to avoid having to eat on Yom HaKippurim. For further discussion of this interesting issue, see the many sources cited in Rav J. David Bleich's aforementioned essay.

www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm SALT!! ("Surf A Little Torah")

RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Motzaei Shabbat, Sept. 18, 2004

Twice in the Rambam's Hilkhot Teshuva he discusses the unique status of the Aseret Yemei Teshuva ("Ten Days of Repentance" – the period from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur) with respect to repentance. First, in the second chapter (halakha 6), the Rambam establishes the special power of teshuva during this period. He writes, "Although teshuva and pleading are always effective, during the ten days from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur they are especially potent and are immediately accepted." The source for this concept, the Rambam adds, is a verse in Sefer Yeshayahu (55:6): "Search for the Lord when He is present." According to Chazal, this refers to the period of the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, when G-d is "present" – He draws nearer to us, to accept our teshuva and prayers.

One chapter later (3:3-4), the Rambam once again makes reference to this period, focusing on the critical importance of these days with respect to divine judgment. The Rambam here discusses the judgment that takes place on Rosh Hashanah and continues – at least for the beinonim (those with equal merits and sins) – until Yom Kippur. Since our fate is determined on Yom Kippur, the Rambam writes, the custom developed to increase our performance of mitzvot and kindness during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva and to arise early for special prayers. He notes in this context that the shofar sounded on Rosh Hashanah is meant to serve as a "wake-up call" to arouse us all to teshuva, so as to avoid harsh judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Why does the Rambam speak of the uniqueness of the Aseret Yemei Teshuva in two different chapters and in two different contexts? Why does he not combine these two discussions into a single section on the topic of the Ten Days of Repentance?

The answer, as developed by Rav Yair Kahn in a VBM shiur on this topic (available in the VBM archives, at <http://vbm-torah.org/roshandyk/10days.htm>), involves the different types of teshuva the Rambam addresses in these two chapters. Rav Soloveitchik zt"l claimed that just as there is a mitzva to perform teshuva for specific sins, so is there a more general requirement of teshuva, to change directions and improve the overall quality of one's religious life. The second chapter of Hilkhot Teshuva, where the Rambam speaks of the unique potency of teshuva during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, begins by defining "teshiva gemura" – complete teshuva. The Rambam establishes that one achieves complete teshuva when he finds himself in the same situation in which he committed his sin and now exercises self-control and refrains from the forbidden act. In this context, he speaks of the special power of the Ten Days of Repentance. This chapter, Rav Kahn explained, deals with the first and more familiar category of teshuva – repentance for a specific transgression. It addresses the person who struggles with himself to overcome a particular tendency to commit a particular misdeed. The period of Aseret Yemei Teshuva is uniquely suited for this process, as the Almighty draws near and invites us to return and repent.

In the third chapter, by contrast, the Rambam discusses G-d's overall assessment of the human being and of the world at large. This chapter deals not with the sinner who acknowledges his sin and seeks atonement, but rather with the one who needs the "wake-up call" of the shofar, the person who slumbers in his complacent delusions of piety. The shofar of Rosh Hashanah beckons us to conduct a thorough process of introspection, it warns of the judgment we must face and of the deficiencies for which we will be held accountable.

It turns out, then, that this period of Aseret Yemei Teshuva serves a dual function. Firstly, it assists those who seek to repent for particular sins of which they are aware. But in addition, it is meant to shatter our complacency and urge us to find ways to improve our overall spiritual condition, preparing us for the final phase of judgment on Yom Kippur.

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www.vbm-torah.org/salt.htm SALT!! ("Surf A Little Torah")

RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Yom Rishon, the fourth day of the seventh month of the year [3]316

Sunday –4 Tishrei 5764 – Sept. 19, 2004 According to the Rambam (beginning of Hilkhot Teshuva), the Torah obligation of teshuva – "repentance" for a sin – entails specifically "viduy" – verbal confession. What exactly must one declare to fulfill this obligation? The Gemara in Masekhet Yoma (87b) establishes that the basic formula of viduy consists of three words: "Aval anachnu chatanu," which for the moment we will translate as, "However, we have sinned." This text is codified by the Rambam in Hilkhot Teshuva (2:8) as well as by the Rama, in his glosses to the Shulchan Arukh (O.C. 607:3).

The question, of course, arises as to the meaning behind the first of these three words – "aval." How can we begin a declaration with the word "however," or "rather"? In fact, in the text that we use nowadays in the viduy service, we incorporate these three words as part of an entire paragraph, in which we declare, "Please, may our prayers come before You... for we are not brazen and stiff-necked to say before You... 'We are righteous and have not sinned.' Rather, we have sinned." In this text, we specifically mention that we do not consider ourselves righteous and free of sin, but we rather acknowledge the fact that we have sinned. But the Gemara implies that strictly speaking, the mere declaration of "aval anachnu chatanu" suffices. What would the word "aval" mean at the very beginning of the viduy proclamation? Indeed, due to this problem, the commentary to the "Avodat Yisrael" siddur claims that earlier portion of the viduy proclamation that we say has very early roots and is included in the crux of viduy.

In truth, however, as Rav Yitzchak Mirsky points out in his "Hegyoinei Halakha" (p. 172), we find already in the Torah a number of statements beginning with the word "aval." In fact, one such verse very closely parallels our context, the viduy declaration. When Yosef's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain, and the viceroy – who, unbeknownst to them, was actually Yosef – wrongly accuses them of having come to spy the land, they recognize that the current crisis serves as punishment for their mistreatment of Yosef. They exclaim, "Aval asheimim anachnu al achinu" – "Indeed, we are guilty on account of our brother" (Bereishit 42:21). Both Rashi and Targum Onkelos interpret the word "aval" to mean "truthfully," or "indeed." It expresses firm and resolute belief in what is about to be said. Accordingly, the word "aval" at the beginning of the three-word formula of viduy serves to reaffirm our awareness of guilt. It means that we acknowledge wholeheartedly, without any hesitation or doubts, that we are guilty before G-d. We come before Him without any excuses, but rather with full recognition of the fact that we have transgressed and could and should have acted differently.

A different approach perhaps arises from Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch's commentary to that verse in Bereishit. Rav Hirsch writes, " 'Aval' always opposes a previous supposition, darkens what previously had seemed clear and definite. [Rav Hirsch here seeks to establish an etymological relationship between 'aval' and the word 'afel' – darkness.] As the brothers say 'aval' here, previously up till now they must not have considered themselves guilty." According to Rav Hirsch, we need not resort to an alternate translation of the word "aval." In this verse, too, "aval" means "but" or "however." When used at the beginning of a statement, "aval" signifies a change of heart, a new revelation that dispels previous assumptions and fundamentally changes one's perspective. The brothers here declare that everything they had thought until now concerning their treatment of Yosef was in error. This is the connotation of "aval."

This understanding of the word "aval" can very easily be applied to the text of viduy, as well. The mitzva of viduy requires that we divest ourselves of our delusions of innocence, that we change our outlook on ourselves and our behavior. We are to see things differently than we had

previously seen them. We are not as innocent and guiltless as we have perhaps thought until now. "Rather, we have sinned." Like Yosef's brothers in Egypt, we are to allow the uneasy feeling of shame and guilt to take the place of the comfortable feeling of confidence and assurance that we have likely felt until this point.



From: RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com Sent: Sept. 23, 2004  
RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS  
Jerusalem Post Sept. 24, 2004  
YOM KIPPUR AND JEWISH MEMORY

The central theme of Yom Kippur is naturally repentance and heavenly forgiveness. This theme is emphasized in the order of the prayer services of the day. The recitation of the confession of our sins and shortcomings and our commitment to try and do better are an integral part of all of the prayers of this holy day. Yet, there is another, more subtle and not openly expressed idea that haunts the Yom Kippur prayer services. That is the recollection of the story of the Jewish people, of our past troubles and triumphs and of our ability to endure all and survive and remain vital. In the Ashkenazic liturgy, the service of the High Priest in the Temple in Jerusalem is recreated in the Musaf service. Based on the talmudic references and descriptions of those services, which appear in tractate Yoma, the poets of Israel have woven a tapestry that gives the worshipper, centuries and continents removed from the Temple, a feeling of immediacy and of being, even now, a participant in those moments of spiritual grandeur. We bow and prostrate ourselves before the Lord in our synagogues as our ancestors did long ago in the courtyard of the Temple. We are at one with them at that moment. I may dare to state that the musaf service of Yom Kippur and its description of the High Priest's service in the Temple in Jerusalem did as much to keep alive and real the Jewish dream of returning to Zion as did the kinot of Tisha B'av and the daily prayers regarding the Land of Israel. For those who study and recite these prayers, the High Priest and the Temple become real and alive in one's innermost soul.

The Kol Nidrei prayer, which begins the Yom Kippur evening service, evokes for us the memory of the converso Jews of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition and expulsion. In the Kol Nidrei prayer we state that we are permitted to pray together with all of those Jews who have transgressed and even fallen away from Judaism's practices and values. We remember all of the dark periods of Jewish life over our long exile - the persecutions and forced conversions, the auto-de-fes and the crypto-Jews forced to practice their faith hiding in dark and dank cellars. Yom Kippur therefore comes to remind us not to write off any Jew. There will come another generation of return and rejuvenation. Yom Kippur reminds me of Dona Gracia Beatrice Mendez and Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael. Both were baptized as Christians when they were infants and yet both rose to become leaders of Israel and defenders of Jews and Judaism. Kol Nidrei reminds me of Russian Jewry of our time, risen from the atheism and persecution of Stalin and his cohorts to reassert their Jewishness and return home to the Land of Israel. Their ancestors may have rebelled and cast off Judaism in their zeal to build the brave new world, but they have returned home to help build the strong and growing Jewish state.

In the Ashkenazic selichot for Musaf in the Yom Kippur service, we read of the ten martyrs of Israel in Roman times. Rabbi Akiva and his companions are described to us in detail, as is their manner of cruel execution and martyrdom. The Jewish world still is founded on the words, deeds and values of these great people. Rabbi Akiva still lives amongst the Jewish people. And the prayer service of Yom Kippur contributed to the Jewish retention of his memory and kept alive the flame of inspiration that he lit almost nineteen centuries ago. But that

selicha prayer also confirms the tenacity of Jewish spirit and the strength of its resolve. In effect, it states clearly on the holiest day of the Jewish year that the Jewish people lives on and intends to do so no matter what the difficulties, problems and tragedies that it now endures and may yet be forced to endure. It was the memory of Rabbi Akiva, of the Jewish martyrdom throughout the ages, of the Holocaust of our times, of the terrorist murders that we suffer from now, that nevertheless gave Jews the strength to conclude the Yom Kippur services with the confident declaration: "Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt!" It is this subtle tale of Jewish history that is embedded in the Yom Kippur services that help grant it its majesty and meaning. May the blessings of Yom Kippur extend to us throughout the coming blessed new year.

Parsha Sept. 24, 2004 YOM KIPPUR

Though on Yom Kippur our prayers and thoughts are directed heavenward, the real Yom Kippur must take place within us. It is far easier to confess one's sins and shortcomings to an unseen G-d than to confess them truly to one's self. The Torah teaches us that the High Priest of Israel entered the holy sanctuary - the inner sanctum - of the Temple on Yom Kippur. The Talmud called that entrance of the Kohein Gadol, the High Priest, as entering "Lifnai u'lfanim." This phrase meant entering deep within. The rabbis of the Talmud were not only referring to the physical entering into the chamber of the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem but they were obliquely referring to entering our own very most inner chambers of heart, mind and soul. All of us are bidden on Yom Kippur to enter "Lifnai u'lfanim." For without true self-examination and true commitment to self-improvement, Yom Kippur can, G-d forbid, be an exercise in futility if not even a meaningless charade. That is what the prophet Isaiah warns us of in the great haftarah of his that we read on the morning of Yom Kippur: "Is this the fast day that I ask of you? That you should bend your head to Me like a reed or that you should beat your breast with your fist?" All such public contrition is meaningless if it is not accompanied by a heartfelt conviction for self-improvement and for better behavior towards G-d and man consistent with such convictions and self-analysis.

Yom Kippur allows for such a deep entrance into one's inner self. It is a day of abstinence from food and drink and from other physical activities. It is an escape from the stress and pressures of our everyday lives and their attendant problems and frustrations. We always are concerned about others - family, friends, Israel, the world, the economy, etc. Yom Kippur gives us a chance to be concerned and preoccupied about ourselves - not in a selfish way but in a meaningful and positive fashion. It is the one day of the year that we are able to enter deep into ourselves and find meaning and purpose to our existence. This is not a simple manner. It may very well not be achieved in one day - even if that one day be the holy day of Yom Kippur. But Yom Kippur at the very least focuses for us the necessity of attempting to reach deep within ourselves in order to make our lives more meaningful and serene. The prophet Isaiah describes evil people as being tossed about in a raging sea of their desires and frustrations. The Lord wishes us to sail on calm waters of serenity, belief, commitment and holy behavior. The day of Yom Kippur can mark the beginning of that journey of tranquility and godly purpose. The day should not be squandered only in external behavior of piety and contrition. It should help us reach deep within ourselves to touch and polish our souls and be the day of repentance and renewal that G-d intended.

Gemar chatima tova.

Rabbi Berel Wein Visit us at [www.Rabbiwein.com](http://www.Rabbiwein.com)

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Sept. 22, 2004 To: yhe-holiday@etzion.org.il Subject:

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)

## THE INTEGRITY OF TESHUVA

Based on a Shiur By HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN

ADAPTED BY RAV AARON ROSS

The term "integrity" has two possible meanings: the first denotes wholeness as opposed to fragmentation; the second has moral overtones, portraying a sense of honesty and total opposition to any form of falsehood. Our goal here will be to see if these two definitions can be interrelated in the context of teshuva (repentance). Can teshuva be both true and limited, genuine yet partial? Can fragmented teshuva be subjectively sincere? In other words, can one repent for violating one commandment and not for another, yet still believe that both are the word of G-d? On an objective level, can we speak of G-d accepting such repentance?

Our investigation begins in Devarim 10:12-13. There, Moshe tells the Jews:

"And now, Yisrael, what does G-d ask from you? Only to fear the Lord your G-d, to walk in His ways and to love Him and to serve the Lord your G-d, with all your heart and all your soul; to keep the mitzvot of G-d and His ordinances that I am commanding you today, to be good for you."

The gemara (Berakhot 33b) notes that at the outset, it seems that Moshe is telling the Jews that G-d wants very little, "just" that they be G-d-fearing individuals. How can this be considered a minor request? To Moshe, however, it was a relatively easy level to attain, and the two verses taken together demonstrate how this it is to be accomplished. The first verse speaks of major religious values - fearing G-d, loving Him, walking in His ways. The second verse is more particular, describing various categories of commandments that the Jews are to perform. Together, these two elements are characteristic of the ideal of Avodat Hashem (service to G-d) that Moshe wished to pass to the Jews for posterity. We are asked to move along a dual axis: a grand majestic approach to service of G-d, paralleled by a detailed, somewhat mundane form of service that is rife with rituals and procedures.

The world of Halakha is both teleological and formal. It wants us to strive for the grand and the ultimate in deveikut ba-Shem (attaching oneself to G-d), yet it does so by commanding us to involve ourselves in the minutiae of daily life, seemingly far removed from the grandiose view that one would envision. In a similar sense, the first two paragraphs of the Shema express the themes of accepting the yoke of mitzvot and accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. While each theme is the focus of a separate paragraph, Rambam notes that they are actually two sides of the same coin, together comprising up the single obligation of reciting the Shema. They both lead to the ultimate goal of following and pursuing G-d and cleaving to Him.

Rambam's prime Biblical source for the mitzva of teshuva is the verse of "ve-hitvadu, and they will confess" (Bamidbar 5:7), a verse that comes in the context of the laws of one who steals from a convert (gezel ha-ger). The second source comes from the laws concerning the Yom Kippur service - "for on this day you will be forgiven..." (Vayikra 16:30). While this latter verse is often read as a promise, Rabbeinu Yona notes that it refers to a special mitzva of repentance on Yom Kippur.

There is a marked contrast between these two sources. In Bamidbar, the focus is on a very specific act that may be very limited in import - a person atones for one instance of thievery. On the other hand, in the verse in Vayikra, the word "tit'haru" (you will be purified) does not focus on any particular sin, and no verbal confession is mentioned in the verse. Unlike the viddui (confession) that we say nowadays in our prayers, the gemara in Yoma lists several suggested forms of viddui, all of which are general in nature. In marked contrast

to the Bamidbar approach, the gemara seems to focus on a general acknowledgment of sin as a sufficient form of confession.

This contrast is reflected in the Rambam's writings as well. He begins his Hilkhot Teshuva by saying that when a person transgresses "one" of the mitzvot in the Torah, he then has to recite viddui and thus fulfills a positive commandment. This viddui that is said over transgressing a particular commandment is described by Rambam as itself being specific; one must name the sin he committed. However, in chapter two of Hilkhot Teshuva, Rambam speaks of teshuva and Yom Kippur, and there the focus is once again on the general - "Aval anachnu chatanu, But we have sinned." There is no mention of particulars, but rather a simple seeking out of G-d when He is near.

These two different approaches to teshuva address themselves to different aspects of sin. In any sinful act, one can speak of multiple facets: the misdeed itself; the fact that any sin constitutes a denial of G-d and His priorities; the impact on the self, as sin defiles an individual and renders him impure and dirty; the inherent rebellion against G-d and, as it were, against the Kingdom of Heaven; and the fracturing of the relationship between G-d and man. Taken as a whole, these five elements can be categorized under two rubrics: moral, focusing on the wrong as such, and religious, focusing on one's relationship to G-d.

Ramban (Shemot 20:3) notes that when G-d is described as "jealous" regarding those who worship idols, that description describes only G-d's relationship to the Jews, an idea that fits in with the imagery of G-d and the Jews as man and wife. This idea, however, can be extended beyond idolatry to the entire purview of religious experience. It can be applied to anything that ruptures the intimate relationship between man and G-d.

If sin is to be viewed as a multifaceted event, then it is logical to assume that teshuva is similarly multifaceted. There is teshuva that reasserts G-d's authority, and there is teshuva that responds to the contamination of the self. In one case, we are instructed to make up "to" G-d, and in the other, we are implored to make up "with" G-d - "ve-hitvadu" and "tit'haru."

Let us return now to our original dilemma. While the goal is obviously that we strive for total teshuva, there nevertheless exists the possibility of a partial and particular teshuva through "ve-hitvadu." We rule (Horayot 11a) that one who is known to eat forbidden fat (mumar okhel chelev) may nevertheless bring a sin-offering if he eats blood, yet one who is known to worship idols (mumar le-avoda zara) may not bring a sacrifice if he commits any other sin. In the former case, his habitual sin of eating fat is particular in nature, while in the latter case, the individual has damaged his relationship to G-d. Similarly, a person may repent for one instance of a sin while not repenting for a second instance of the same sin, unless he is such a repeat offender that his repentance is effectively a sham.

That is all good and well for "ve-hitvadu," the particular form of teshuva, but what are we to say about "tit'haru," the more general approach? Can one partially repair his relationship with G-d? Instinctively, it would seem not; either we are committed to Him or we are not. There are no middle-of-the-road approaches to be had.

However, there are qualifications in both directions. Rambam (Hil. Teshuva 7:7) notes that, when a person is steeped in sin, G-d may throw that person's mitzvot back in his face. Any mitzva can come to be seen as an abomination. In the Yerushalmi (Kiddushin 1:9), Ben-Azzai discusses, based on a verse in Kohelet, how one fly can ruin an entire jar of oil that is to be used for anointment purposes. In a similar sense, it can be suggested that a single sin can reach a level of severity that it offsets all of one's merits.

While these examples may be a bit extreme, we also must consider the reverse qualification. The holistic or systemic teshuva of "tit'haru" makes sense because one cannot be "tovel ve-sheretz be-yado," one

cannot purify himself while still holding the very object that is the cause of his defilement. Rav Soloveitchik noted, in the name of the Chavot Yair, that the last line of Yoma, comparing G-d's purification of the sinner to that of a mikveh (ritual bath), is not as enthusiastic as it is usually made out to be. The gemara first notes that Yom Kippur does not atone for sins committed between man and his fellow man. Then it concludes with Rabbi Akiva's statement of that the Jews are fortunate that they come to purify themselves before G-d Himself, and that He serves, as it were, as their mikveh. Why are these two lines juxtaposed? The Rav answered that when G-d purifies the Jews, he does so acting as a mikveh - one cannot purify himself partially. If one has not yet cleansed himself of his sins against his fellow man, then not even G-d Himself can purify that individual. It is either all or nothing when it comes to one's relationship to G-d.

The mishna (Avot 3:8) states that a person who forgets part of what he has learned is held accountable for his life - a very harsh statement indeed. What is one to do if extenuating circumstances, as are extremely common in our lives, cause one to forget? To answer this problem, the mishna states that one is held accountable only if he actively uproots his learning from his heart. What does this mean? Rabbeinu Yona says that the failure to review adequately is included in the concept of uprooting what one has learned. Either way, the message is clear. One who forgets, even if due only to the conditions around him, yet is not bothered by that fact, is equivalent to one who uproots the Torah from his heart. To him, ignorance of a certain part of Torah is not a matter of major importance. Yet this harsh verdict does not apply to one who learns and wishes that he could do more, yet finds himself limited, despite his thirst for Torah and his concern for his spiritual development. His forgetfulness is not equivalent to uprooting.

The same is true when we speak about teshuva. If one aims for total teshuva, then, regardless of how slowly his teshuva progresses, he can feel confident that his teshuva will purify him of sin. However, if one repents in some respects, yet is unperturbed about his failure to do so in other areas, then his teshuva is sorely lacking. "Ve-hitvadu" without an eye towards "tit'haru" cannot work. Yet if the ultimate goal of total purification is kept in sight, then even a "partial" teshuva can be made to work, and can help an individual along the path to complete repentance.

[Based on a teshuva lecture delivered at Kehillath Jeshurun in New York in Elul 5757 (1997). This adaptation originally appeared on Rav Ross's website, <http://www.chaburas.org>

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Arutz Sheva

YONAH: FLEEING FROM G-D?

BY RABBI SHLOMO AVINER

Sep 22, '04 / 7 Tishrei 5765

Before anything, we will answer the first question that stands before us: how is it at all possible to flee from Hashem? The answer given by Rabbi Yehudah

Halevi (Kuzari 2:14), the Radak and other early sages [Rishonim] is that the prophet Yonah certainly knew that it is impossible to flee from Hashem. If we look closely at the text, we see that it does not say that he wanted to flee "from Hashem" rather "from before Hashem." (Yonah 1:3) The prophet Yonah wanted to flee from the place of prophecy. It is only possible to receive prophecy in the Land of Israel, and therefore, if he fled from the Land of Israel, he would not be able to receive the prophecy (Abarbanel and Malbim).

The Radak writes: "And how would he be able to flee, when David said (Tehillim 139:7), 'Or where can I flee from Your presence?,' rather 'from before' is like 'before'. Since the prophet was full of wisdom and knowledge, how then could he consider fleeing from Hashem? Rather, he thought 'from before Hashem'. Because the explanation of 'from before' means that he was before Hashem, and this is the spirit of prophecy, because he thought that if he left the Land of Israel to outside the Land, then the spirit of prophecy would not rest on him."

The Master of the Universe is found in all places. He is called "The Place of the World": "He is called the Place of the World but the world is not His place." (Bereshit Rabbah 68) He does not have a place, He is the place! (See Nefesh HaChaim 4:1-4) He establishes all experience. Divine supervision, divine knowledge, divine intervention is in every place, but prophecy is not in every place.

Question: How do we learn this from the verses?

Answer: Our early sages explain that "from before Hashem" means that the essence of divine supervision, that this level of the Divine Presence, only occurs in the Land of Israel. Nevertheless, it is written that when the Nation of Israel is exiled, the Divine Presence is exiled with it. "The Divine Presence is exiled," (Megillah 29a) but there are levels of the Divine Presence. Our sages say, "Ten people who sit and engage in Torah, the Divine Presence rests amongst them... even five... even three... even two... even one..." (Avot 3:7) If so, is it not possible to initially state that the Divine Presence rests with even one person who learns Torah? Rather, there are levels; ten is more than five, and so on.

The Divine Presence of prophecy is only in the Land of Israel. There is no prophecy outside of the Land. It is said about the Land of Israel: "A Land that... the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are on from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." (Devarim 11:12) The Land of Israel is the Land of prophecy. The sages were surprised by the verse, "It was that the word of Hashem came to Yechezkel the Cohen, son of Buzi, in the land of Kasdim..." (Yechezkel 1:3) How did he prophecy outside the Land? The answer: "[It] was" [means] 'it already was,' (Moed Katan 25a); he was already prophesying in the Land of Israel and continued to prophecy in the exile.

The Rambam explains that there is no prophecy outside of the Land because there is no joy outside of the Land, and prophecy only rests among happiness (Moreh Nevuchim 2:36 and Shemonah Perakim, chap. 7). Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel explains that prophecy is part of the special characteristics of the Land of Israel. The deficiency is not that outside of the Land there is a different spiritual state that prevents the absorption of the prophecy, as explained by the Rambam, rather, the prophecy is experienced in the Land of Israel alone (Rabbi Abarbanel's introduction to the book of Amos). Therefore, they ask: if there is no prophecy outside of the Land, how did the prophet Yechezkel prophesy on the River Kevar? And the answer:

Yechezkel began to be a prophet in the Land of Israel, and he related outside of the Land the prophecies he received in the Land of Israel (Moed Katan 25a). But it is impossible to receive prophecy outside of the Land. Therefore, Yonah rushed to depart the Land of Israel to outside the Land, to the sea, to Tarshish, to a place where he could not receive prophecy. We still have not answered the question of how a righteous person like Yonah could try to evade prophecy, but we explained the meaning of fleeing "from before Hashem" - from the possibility to receive prophecy.

Question: It seems that he already received the prophecy; if so, what benefit was the fleeing?

Answer: According to the Radvaz and the Malbim (from Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel), he still had not received the definite words to relate, it is only written: "Call out to her." (1:2) There still were no specifics as to what he was to call out. Only after he was spit out of the fish was the prophecy related: "You should arise to Nineveh, the great city, and call out to it the announcement which I tell you." (3:2) The Radvaz, Rabbi

David ben Zimra, brings a proof from Targum Yonatan: "And Yonah arose to flee to the sea before he prophesied." He also suggests the possibility that this was the first prophecy of Yonah - before the prophecy in the matter of Yeravam ben Yoash (see Kings II, 14:25). Even regarding Moshe Rabbenu, master of all of the prophets, our sages say that at the beginning of his prophesying he was a novice in prophecy (Shmot Rabbah 3:1). Sometimes, in the beginning, the prophecy is not completely clear to the prophet (Sanhedrin 89b, Derech Hashem of the Ramchal 3:4:7), as we see with the prophet Shmuel (see Derech Hashem 3:4:3 and Shut HaRadvaz, vol. 2 #842).

Question: How did Moshe Rabbenu prophecy in the Land of Egypt and in the desert?

Answer: Rabbi Yehudah Halevi provides two answers to this question. One is that it is possible to prophecy in the Land of Israel or regarding the Land of Israel: "in it or regarding it." (Kuzari 2, 14) The second answer is that that particular area is attached to the Land of Israel. There is a dispute regarding the border "the riverbed of Egypt" [nachal Mitzrayim], whether this is the Nile or Wadi El-Arish. Nevertheless, the region of Yamit according to all opinions is the Land of Israel, since it is located on the other side of Wadi El-Arish. But according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi that "the riverbed of Egypt" is the eastern offshoot of the Nile, called Pelusium - the Land of Goshen is the Land of Israel.

If so, then why did we leave Egypt? Rather, all understand that also in the Land of Israel there are levels and it is not fitting to remain there (in Egypt). The Radvaz, Rabbi David ben Zimra, who lived in Egypt four hundred years ago, relates a story about a Torah scholar in Egypt who was asked why he did not ascend to the Land of Israel. He responded, "Here, too, is the Land of Israel." But before his death, he requested that, in any event, they should bury him in the Land of Israel. It appears that he did not even really convince himself (Shut HaRadvaz vol. 6, 2, 2206).

In the Land of Israel there are levels, there is the interior and the outskirts. One should enter into the interior, the center, and from there spread out to the outskirts. Moshe Rabbenu himself pleaded to cross the Jordan (Devarim 2:25), even though the eastern side of the Jordan is the Land of Israel. The Jordan River is located in the middle of the Land of Israel, and the Eastern Side belongs to the tribes of Gad, Reuven and half of Menasheh. Moshe Rabbenu is buried on Mount Nebo (Devarim 32:49-50), which is in the territory of Reuven. But the Land of Israel on the western side of the Jordan is holier than the Land of Israel on the eastern side. There are levels.

The Divine Presence in exile is weak, but Hashem also does not abandon us when we are outside of the Land, and within the Land of Israel itself there are also levels. The eastern side of the Land of Israel is not like the western side. The Land of Israel is not like Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not like the Temple Mount, and above it is the Temple, the Holy and the Holy of Holies. There are levels in holiness.

[Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig]

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From: RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column [parshat\_hashavua@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: Sept. 22, 2004 To: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column

Shabbat Shalom: Yom Kippur By Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - One of the highlights of the Yom Kippur liturgy is the reading of the Book of Jonah, a small book of four chapters which contains a world of philosophy. Undoubtedly the major message of Jonah is likewise the major message of Yom Kippur, so that the proper understanding of the former will most certainly illuminate the latter.

G-d comes to Jonah, son of Amitai, sending him to call the people of Ninveh to repentance. Jonah refuses to do so, and believes he can escape the G-d of the heavens of the earth by sailing to the sea. The central issue of the Book of Jonah is why the prophet should have found a mission to Ninveh so objectionable. We must

remember that Ninveh is the capital city of Assyria and Assyria was then the arch enemy of Israel. Indeed, Assyria defeated the ten tribes and banished them into exile in the 8th century B.C.E. Jonah cannot understand why G-d is interested in Assyria's repentance. After all, as long as the Jews have more merits than the Assyrians, the chances of an Israeli victory in battle are far greater. Hence Jonah seeks to escape G-d by boarding a ship bound for Tarshish.

A raging storm develops at sea, and a drawing of lots makes it clear that Jonah is responsible for the storm. It is fascinating to note that water is both the major symbol of the Book of Jonah as well as the major symbol of the Tishrei period of festivals. Water is both the symbol of life as well as of destruction. The Bible opens "and the spirit of G-d hovered over the face of the waters" and no life can grow without the presence of water. At the same time the Bible tells us right before its description of the life giving waters that "there was darkness on the face of the tehom", usually translated as the depth of the cavernous waters of the netherworld. It was after all the waters of the flood which threatened to destroy the world.

At the same time, the Mishna tells us that the Festival of Sukkot is when G-d judges our merit for the life giving rain which enables fruit and vegetation to provide sustenance for the coming year. Rain is therefore a symbol of G-d's gracious bounty, His purification of His children on the Day of Forgiveness. As the prophet Yezekiel says in words which we repeat again and again during the Yom Kippur penitential prayers, "And I shall sprinkle upon you the waters of purification and you shall become pure." Hence the festival of Shemini Atzeret in which we thank G-d for rain has a double meaning: G-d's waters bring physical sustenance as well as spiritual purity, the combination of the two bringing redemption. It goes even one step deeper. We begin giving G-d praise as the One whom "causes the winds to blow and the rains to flow" on Shemini Atzeret - and these words of praise are incorporated in the Amidah blessing of the G-d "Who causes the dead to live again." G-d's purifying waters can even revive us from death and bring us eternal life.

Jonah is cast overboard into the raging waters. Has challenged G-d, endeavored to escape the Divine mission, and is therefore worthy of death. G-d, however, in His infinite compassion provides a whale - a creature of the water - to follow Jonah and bring him back to life. In Jonah's own words "I called, in my distress, to G-d and He answered me. From the belly of the grave I cried out. You heard my voice. You cast me into the depth of the heart of the sea... your waves passed over me... yet You lifted my life from the pit O Lord my G-d." (Jonah 2:3-7).

The waters almost destroyed Jonah and the waters in the form of a water-creature sent by G-d saved his life. G-d is trying to teach the crucial lesson that Assyria, who has been so evil and destructive, can and must make a complete turnaround if the world is to be redeemed. And G-d is also teaching that He, G-d, is willing to overlook the evil Assyria has committed if she will indeed repent. Jonah refuses to accept this. He is after all the son of Amitai, a name which is derived from emet, truth. Truth demands that evil never be overlooked; evil must be punished. This is precisely how Jonah explains why he refused G-d's mission "... This is why I hastened to flee to Tarshish; I knew that you are a gracious and merciful G-d slow to anger abundant in loving kindness and forgiving of evil." (Jonah 4: 2) This is not the G-d in whom I want to believe, the G-d who described Himself earlier to Moses as the G-d who is "abundant in loving kindness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). But Jonah has forgotten that his first name means dove, and that just as the dove was saved from the flood so was he, Jonah, undeservedly saved from the raging waters. G-d is trying to teach him that the G-d of compassion will bestow His life giving purity even upon those who have sinned.

On Yom Kippur each of us descend into the "waters of death". We wear the white reminiscent of shrouds, we remove ourselves from all physical necessities and pleasures such as food, drink, and sex, and we wear non leather shoes of the mourner. For whom are we mourning? We are mourning for ourselves who have died because of our sins.

However G-d in his compassion returns us to life on Yom Kippur, reborn and purified. G-d sprinkles upon us His life giving waters "because on this day you shall be forgiven of all your sins; before G-d shall you stand pure" All of us experience the death and the rebirth of Jonah. As the final mishnah in Yoma says, "how fortunate are you O Israel! Before whom are you purified, and who purifies you? Our Father in Heaven".

Shabbat Shalom.