

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON SHABBOS SHUVA HAAZINU  
AND YOM KIPPUR - 5763

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Tuesday, September 10, 2002 To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject: Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger to subscribe, email: weekly@torahweb.org [http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rneu\\_haazinu.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rneu_haazinu.html)  
RABBI YAAKOV NEUBERGER  
NON-PEOPLE

Perhaps we have grown accustomed to having current events vividly bring alive the phrases of our age old Torah. Nevertheless I don't think it wise to lose the opportunity to appreciate the depth and presence of every nuance in Hashem's word.

This has come to mind unfortunately in the last few years as we read Parshas Ha'azinu, almost always as we find ourselves in introspection of the Yamim Noraim. While expressing profound disappointment in us, Hashem reminds of "hester panim", the times where we will feel Hashem hiding his face from us. It is then that He lays out for us (32:21),"They have caused me to seem jealous [as they pursue] non-gods, they have angered me with their nonsense, and I will make them jealous with a non-people, I will make them angry with a foolish nation."

Our sages as quoted by Rashi and Ramban found in the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash and the subsequent Diaspora the realization of this prophecy. The culture of the times introduced pagan and obviously powerless and unresponsive deities into our midst. As promised, our fling with non-gods delivered us not too long after, into the hands of the kasdim, a "non-people". What gave them the kasdim this distinction? Chazal submit that they had no land or language of their own and as testimony to their rootless-ness, they borrowed the name of the land in which they were found.

My father-in-law, Harav Zevulun Charlop shlit"a, is wont to point out that once again we are living with this verse as we are incessantly aggravated by a non-people. They do not have a distinctive language or culture and their history is a tapestry of myth and propaganda. Indeed their rootless-ness is bringing them to destroy the concrete historic bonds that we do have to Yerushalayim and its holiest places.

How did the kasdim come about if they in fact come from no where? Chazal explain that Hashem composed them simply to bring us into line. Frightening as it is, it would certainly explain how an organization that began in the seventies and that has terrorized the civilized world has had such a rapid rise, a rarity in world history.

To be sure, this leaves us to speculate what is the "non-god" of our own time. What are the cultural influences that we allow to fill our lives often leaving little room for that which will genuinely resonate within us. This certainly should give us pause as welcome 5763 praying that it is replete with good news for all of us and genuine peace for us all.

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<http://www.koltorah.org/ravj/kapparot.htm>  
From Vayelech - Yom Kippur September 22-27, 2001  
THE MINHAG OF KAPPAROT  
BY RABBI HOWARD JACHTER

The Minhag of Kapparot has a very interesting history. There is no mention of this practice in the Gemara or the Rambam. The Geonim and Rishonim penned mixed reviews of the practice - some opposed it, but many heartily endorsed it. By the time of the early Acharonim both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews had accepted the practice. The later Acharonim do not express opposition to the practice but expressed some very serious reservations about its implementation. In this essay we will trace the development of this Minhag and try to understand its significance for Yom Kippur.

Geonim and Rishonim Rashi to Shabbat 81b (s.v. Hai Parpisa) cites a fascinating practice from the Teshuvot Hageonim. We make small palm leaf baskets and we fill the basket with dirt and fertilizer twenty-two or fifteen days before Rosh Hashana for each boy and girl in the house. We plant in these baskets either an Egyptian bean or a

type of legume. On Erev Rosh Hashana everyone takes his plant and swings it around his head seven times and states this is instead of this, this is my replacement, this is my exchange, and then we throw the plant into the river.

The Rosh (Yoma 8:23), the Mordechai (at the beginning of his notes to Masechet Yoma), and the Tur (Orach Chaim 605) record this practice with approval. They, however, mention that the usual practice is to take a chicken and slaughter it. They also note that the ritual is performed on Erev Yom Kippur. The Rosh explains that the Gemara sometimes refers to a chicken as a Gever (see Yoma 20b), which also means man. Thus, a chicken is an appropriate substitute for man. He also offers a pragmatic explanation: that chickens are readily available and less expensive than larger animals such as a ram.

The Chayei Adam (144:4) and Mishna Berura (605:2) explain that the idea of Kapparot is modeled after the idea of a Korban, as explained by the Ramban (Vayikra 1:9). The Ramban writes that fundamentally the individual who sinned deserves to have his life taken as punishment for violating Hashem's Law. However, Hashem in His mercy permits us to substitute an animal. When presenting a Korban, one should feel that his blood deserves to be spilled and that his body deserves to be burned, had it not been for Hashem's merciful permission to offer a Korban as a substitute. Thus, offering a Korban constitutes a reenactment of Akeidat Yitzchak. Similarly, the Chayei Adam and Mishna Berura write that during the Kapparot ritual, one should contemplate that one deserves to be slaughtered just as the Kapparot chicken is slaughtered and that the chicken is a substitute. See Kaf Hachaim (605:10) for other explanations for Kapparot.

On the other hand, the Bait Yosef (O.C. 605 s.v. Yeish Mekomot) cites the Rashba (Teshuvot 395) who opposes the practice of Kapparot. The Rashba worked hard to successfully convince the people in his area (thirteenth century Barcelona, Spain) to cease practicing Kapparot. He believes that this practice smacks of Darchei Emori (illicit magic). The Rashba does, however, acknowledge that all of the Ashkenazic rabbis of his time practiced Kapparot and that the practice is recorded in the writings of Rav Hai Gaon. Nevertheless, he sustains his opposition to this practice. The Bait Yosef cites that the Ramban (the Rebbe of the Rashba) also opposed the practice of Kapparot because it resembles Darchei Emori.

Shulchan Aruch and Acharonim Accordingly, during the time of the Rishonim, Ashkenazic Jews practiced the Minhag of Kapparot, and two great Sephardic authorities (Ramban and Rashba) opposed this practice. The Ramban expresses his opposition to this practice by not mentioning it in his Mishna Torah. Thus, it is not surprising that the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 605) opposes the practice of Kapparot. However, the Rama (ibid.) notes that this practice is recorded as early as the Geonic period and is the accepted practice in all Ashkenazic communities. The Rama regards the practice as a Minhag Vatikin, a venerated practice that one must not neglect. The practice recorded in the Rama is to slaughter a chicken for every family member.

The Ben Ish Chai (Parshat Vayelech 2), Kaf Hachaim (605:8), and Rav Ovadia Yosef (Teshuvot Yechaveh Daat 2:71) record that Sephardic Jews have adopted this custom despite the opposition of Rav Yosef Karo, the author of the Shulchan Aruch. An explanation for this change is that the Ari zt"l enthusiastically embraced this practice (as noted by the Magen Avraham 605:1) based on his Kabbalistic approach. The Ari zt"l has an enormous impact on Sephardic practice in a wide variety of areas.

The Shechita Problem and the Money Alternative Despite the fact that the Rama wholeheartedly endorses the practice of Kapparot, all of the major nineteenth and early twentieth century codes (Chayei Adam (144:4), Kaf Hachaim (605:11), Mishna Berura (605:2), and Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 605:3)) all raised the following procedural concern. They note that the masses are particularly enthusiastic about this practice (too enthusiastic, in the opinion of the Aruch Hashulchan) and that there is nearly universal participation in this Minhag. Thus, enormous pressure is placed on the Shochtim (ritual slaughterers) to slaughter at a very fast pace because they must slaughter a chicken for every member of the community on Erev Yom Kippur. This, in turn, triggers concern for the integrity of the Shechita process. The knife that

is used for slaughtering must be meticulously examined to ascertain that there are absolutely no nicks in the knife. The Chayei Adam and Mishna Berura express concern that an overworked and overburdened Shochet may not notice a subtle nick in the knife. Rav Ovadia Yosef reports that when the local rabbis inspect the knives of the Shochtim involved in slaughtering chickens for Kapparot purposes, they have often discovered nicks in the knives. The Aruch Hashulchan expresses concern that there will not be sufficient time to inspect for Teraifot in the animal. These authorities are horrified by the fact that observance of this Minhag leads to violation of Torah level prohibitions!

Thus the Acharonim suggest two solutions to this problem. The Mishna Berura cites the Pri Megadim who rules that Kapparot may be performed throughout the Aseret Yemai Teshuva. Indeed, Rashi records that this ritual is performed on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Accordingly, the Mishna Berura suggests that Kapparot be performed a day or two before Erev Yom Kippur to relieve the stress on the Shochtim. Rav Ovadia Yosef writes that Kapparot may be performed throughout the entire Aseret Yemai Teshuva. The Chayei Adam, Kaf Hachaim, and Mishna Berura all suggest that Kapparot may be performed on money to relieve the pressure on the Shochtim.

The Chayei Adam notes that the Minhag did not originally involve slaughtering a chicken, as we have seen from the aforementioned quote from Rashi commenting on Shabbat 81b. Thus, swinging money around one's head, reciting that the money should be the substitute, and donating the money to charity is a viable alternative to Kapparot performed with a chicken. This is the reason why many families practice Kapparot using money. In our communities in this country, performing Kapparot with chickens is not very popular for a variety of reasons, and the concerns expressed by the various Acharonim do not appear to be relevant. Thus, many people have returned to the practice of performing Kapparot with chickens, instead of only using money.

Two Observations The problem of overburdened Shochtim was a year round problem of enormous proportions in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. The owners of the kosher slaughterhouses terribly abused the Shochtim. This not only made the lives of the Shochtim miserable (some Shochtim even had to walk to the slaughterhouse late on Shabbat afternoon, so that they could start Shechita immediately after Shabbat finished!), but it also called into question the validity of the Shechita. Only through the courageous battles waged by Rabbanim such as Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik and Rav Pinchas Teitz against these abuses did the situation improve. The recently published biographies of Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Teitz recount these battles in detail.

The Aruch Hashulchan bemoans the fact that the masses are devoted to it (the practice of Kapparot) as they are to the Mitzva of Etrog if not more. The Aruch Hashulchan writes that he seeks to cool this passion somewhat because it leads to violations of Torah laws. This comment underscores the attitude that we should have towards Minhagim. It is vitally important for one to follow the Minhagim of his community and family. However, it is also important to maintain perspective. One should understand what practices are required by Torah law, which by rabbinical law, and which practices are merely a custom. Failure to do so can lead to negative consequences as we see in the context of Kapparot. When there is a conflict between a Torah law and a custom, the Torah law has priority. Even rabbinic law has priority over a custom in a situation of conflict.

Conclusion Both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews should observe the custom of Kapparot, preferably in the traditional manner outlined by the Rama. One may conjecture that the root of this custom is our desire to offer Korbanot, especially on Yom Kippur. In the painful absence of the Avodat Bait Hamikdash, the Jewish soul pines for an experience that even slightly resembles the experience of offering a Korban in the Bait Hamikdash. We should note that the Spanish Portuguese Jewish community does not practice Kapparot, in accordance with the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalists@shemayisrael.com]  
Sent: Sept. 12, 2002 To: Peninim Parsha Subject:

PENINIM ON THE TORAH  
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

PARSHAS HA'AZINU May my teaching drop like rain; may my utterance flow like the dew. (32:2) Ibn Ezra explains the simile to rain and dew as meaning that the words of Torah should penetrate the nation and make it fruitful, just as the rain and dew nourish the earth. Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, notes that rain and dew have an effect only on earth, but not on stones. Only soil contains the requisite minerals and nutrients which are conducive to growth. Stones do not produce. Likewise, in order to be successful, a rebbe must have someone with whom to work. The student must possess something: certain basics upon which to build. First and foremost is attitude. The weakest and most challenged student can achieve success if his attitude is focused on success. Torah is much more than a body of knowledge. It is our lifeline, our primer for religious and spiritual development. Hence, the student must have some degree of yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven. If these two principles are in place, then his rebbe's teaching can "drop like rain" and "flow like the dew," nurturing the spiritual development of the student.

This is not meant as a reference to those who toil in the fields of special education and with children who are at risk. Their noble work develops the necessary attitude and enhances the skills required for Torah study. The Ibn Ezra refers to a child who is "turned off" or has never been "turned on." They must first have their hearts of stone sensitized in such a manner as to be conducive to learning.

There is another student who I feel we should address: the one whose parents; either by design or by indifference, turn their child against the Torah. A depressed child cannot learn. By virtue of their actions and behavior, parents can make their child feel distressed- a feeling that can lead to depression and beyond. We also encounter the parent who does not know how to talk to his child, at times being condescending or even abusive. A child cannot learn if his emotional balance is being undermined by his parents. We should also not ignore the parent who denigrates the school and the rebbe.

Last, we turn to the key word which lays the groundwork for a child's/student's educational development: obedience. A child who does not obey cannot and will not learn. Rather than punishing a child for disobedience, we should first ask ourselves why the child/student is not being compliant? In response, we suggest the following: Do we know how to tell him what to do? Do we provide the proper example for him to follow? Do we ourselves meet the standard which we impose upon him? The weaker, smaller and less capable will naturally defer to the bigger, the stronger and the more capable. For this reason, the young look up to their elders for guidance. This is true to the extent that the elders prove themselves worthy of this deference, by being superior in stature, strength and ability.

The key to earning the respect and ensuing allegiance of our children is to behave in such a manner that they will have reason to look up to us as morally and spiritually superior. True obedience is not elicited by command. It is not engendered by the substance of what is being asked but, rather, by the character of the person who is asking. Any shortcoming in a parent's behavior, any deficiency in his character, will weaken a child's resolve to obey. The only source of genuine compliance is a child's free-will. Indeed, such submissiveness continues on even after parents and children are separated by distance in space or time.

This idea applies both to parent and teacher alike, for both seek to inspire and inculcate a child in the Torah way. We must remember that a child's docility and obeisance always correspond to the respect he has for the personality of his parent or teacher. This may seem to be a tall order, but then no one suggested it was going to be easy.

Ask your father and he will relate it to you. (32:7)

Parents are always there for us - or, at least, they should be. They advise, direct, guide and offer support and comfort - when necessary. Parents provide our most enduring form of support, being there for us even after they are no longer here in this world. How often does one go to the cemetery and "unload" his troubles to his parents and leave somewhat relieved? We entreat them to be meilitz yosher, intercede, in

our behalf - and they do. I recently came across a poignant story which illustrates this phenomenon.

The story is about a young girl who fell victim to the dread typhus epidemic which raged through the Bergen Belsen concentration camp. Tens of thousands succumbed to the disease. Indeed, the young girl, whom we will call Leah, was given up for dead, so severe were her symptoms. Yet, she refused to give in. She fought as the fever raged. She was determined to live. Afraid that if she lay down she would soon die like so many others, she wandered around the camp, delirious, stumbling over the bodies of the dead and dying. She could no longer go on. Her feet refused to carry her any farther. As she struggled to get up from the cold, wet ground, she noticed a hill veiled in gray mist in the distance. Leah felt a strange sensation come over her. Suddenly, the hill became a symbol of life, a token of hope. She felt that if she reached that hill, she would live; if not, she would die of typhus. There was no way she was going to give up.

Leah attempted to walk toward the hill. As she dragged her feet, she felt she was getting closer to her lifeline. Every step increased her hope; every inch made life a closer reality. As she neared the hill, it took on a new form - it began to look like a huge grave. Nonetheless, the mound remained Leah's symbol of life, and she remained determined to reach it. She crawled on her hands and knees, scraping off the skin. The blood flowed from her wounds - but she moved on toward that strange mound of earth that was the essence of her survival.

Long hours passed, and she finally reached her destination. With feverish hands, bloodied from her terrible ordeal, she touched the cold mound of earth. With her last ounce of strength, she crawled to the top of the mound and collapsed. She just lay there, tears flowing freely down her cheeks. These were no ordinary tears. This was the first time she had cried in the four years since her imprisonment in the camp. She cried because she finally felt that there was hope. She began to cry out for her father, "Papa! Papa! Please help me, for I cannot go on like this any longer!"

Suddenly, she felt a warm hand on top of her head. It was her father gently stroking her head as he used to place his hand over her head every Friday night when he bentched, blessed, her. The hands were comforting and warm. She began to weep with greater intensity as she told her father that she could not go on. She had no more strength to live.

Her father listened as he held her head in his hands. He did not bench her; instead he told her, "Do not worry, my child. The end of the war is near. You will manage to survive a few more days, for the liberation of the camps is soon to come." This "meeting" occurred on Wednesday night, April 11, 1945. The first British tank entered Bergen Belsen on Sunday, April 15th.

The British took whatever survivors there were to the hospital in the British zone. Leah was extremely weak - but alive, as her father had promised. She recovered from typhus and soon returned to Bergen Belsen. Only then did she learn that the huge mound of earth in the big square, where she had spent that fateful night of April 11th, was really a huge, mass grave. Thousands of victims of the Nazi murderers were buried beneath that mound. Among them was Leah's father, who had died months earlier. Leah now realized that on that night when she triumphed over death, she was weeping on her father's grave. For it (the Torah) is not an empty thing for you, for it is your life. (32:47)

When the Torah tells us that the Torah is our life, it means just that - it is our source of living. Without the Torah we are not alive. A parent may say to his child, "You are my life," but despite the overwhelming affection the parent is trying to convey, his very life and existence are not dependent upon his child. The Torah, however, is meticulous in everything it says. Therefore, if the Torah asserts that it is our life, it is certainly no exaggeration.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, cites the Rambam who states that all physical matter falls into five categories. They are: A) domeim - inorganic objects, such as stones and rocks; B) tzomeiach - plant life; C) chai - living animals; D) medaber - man, who has the power of speech; and E) Ben Yisrael - the Jew. The Rambam is teaching us that the Jew is in a category all of his own - distinct in kind and degree.

Plant life is not just a stone with an added feature, - the ability to grow. It is an entirely different form of existence. This is true of each of these five. They are all unique and exclusive of one another. The Ben Yisrael is distinct from the human being, despite the fact that the two seem to possess a greater commonality with each other than all the rest. Moreover, just as each category is distinctive in its individual level of life, so, too is each category unique in its source of life.

While a Ben Yisroel has a physical body, his essence is actually spiritual. Thus, his source of sustenance is primarily of a spiritual nature, not a physical one. He needs physical sustenance to maintain his physical existence, but his spiritual essence must receive spiritual nutrients. Hence, even when the Ben Yisrael is physically removed from his earthly abode, he lives on in the spiritual arena. Torah fulfillment is his source of life through which he connects with his spiritual dimension. If he fails to spiritually nurture himself, he may remain alive from a physical perspective, but his true essence and being are totally abrogated.

Our Chazal teach us in Pirkei Avos 4:21, "This world is compared to a vestibule before the World to Come; prepare yourself in the anteroom so that you may enter the palace." When one enters the lobby of the king's palace, he is already in the king's domain. Although the lobby only leads to the main room, the mere fact that it connects to it gives it special status. Conversely, if it would not be leading into the main room, it would be insignificant in its own right. With this idea in mind, Rav Gifter explains the Mishnah's statement regarding the relationship between this world and Olam Habah. This world has significance only in its connection with Olam Habah. In other words, a Jew must maintain his bond with Torah and mitzvos, his source of life, in order to give this world "vestibule status" to the World to Come. However, if a Jew severs his bond with Torah and rejects its mitzvos, he cuts himself off from his true source of life. Hence, he divorces the vestibule from the palace, and the vestibule simply has no value of its own. We now understand that when the Torah refers to itself as "our life," it is, indeed, a reality.

Hashem spoke to Moshe on that very day. Ascend to this mount of Avarim and die on the mountain. (32:48.49, 50)

Rashi tells us that the phrase, "b'etzem ha'yom ha'zeh," "on that very day," is mentioned in two other places. When Noach entered the Teivah, Ark, the Torah writes that he entered "on that very day." Also, when the Jews left Egypt, the Torah writes that they left "on that very day." The reason for emphasizing when they left and when Noach entered the Ark, is to demonstrate that even if the people would have said, "We will not let Noach leave; we will not let the Jews depart Egypt," Hashem enabled them to leave in the middle of the day, when everyone was around, and no one dared -- or was able -- to prevent them from leaving. Likewise, the Jewish People might have thought that since Moshe Rabbeinu had done so much for them - he led them out of Egypt, split the Sea, brought down the manna and the quail, raised up the well and gave them the Torah - they would not let him "leave." Hashem took Moshe from this world in midday to demonstrate that no human being had control, only Hashem.

The question is obvious: How are we to compare Moshe Rabbeinu's death to Klal Yisrael's departure from Egypt and Noach's entering the Ark? The former and latter would have been preventable with sufficient strength and power. Moshe's death, however, could not have been halted in any way. When his time had come, it had come and we could have done nothing to prevent it from occurring. So what does Rashi mean? Furthermore, what does Rashi mean when he says the Jews might say, "A man who led us from Egypt, etc. cannot be allowed to die" What does Moshe's role in the Exodus have to do with his continuing to live? Certainly, they understood that it was Hashem Who took them out of Egypt, Who controlled nature and split the sea and fed them in the wilderness? What was Moshe's role in this?

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, gives a penetrating response which focuses upon our responsibility to acknowledge and pay gratitude to those who benefit us. Klal Yisrael presented a powerful reason for Hashem to keep Moshe alive. After all, he was the individual who had done so much for them. In his merit, Klal Yisrael was alive and

miraculously sustained throughout forty years of wilderness travel. The amount of gratitude the Jewish people owed Moshe was immeasurable. If so, Hashem had to keep him alive when Klal Yisrael prayed on his behalf. Their obligation to him was overwhelming. This was reason enough for him to live.

Indeed, this is what Eliyahu HaNavi said to Hashem when he prayed on behalf of the Tzarfati's son: "How can You take the life of the son of the widow who provided me with a place to lodge?" Eliyahu owed the widow so much. He was obligated to repay her. Since he owed her - Hashem had to allow her son to live. If the middah, character trait, of hakoras hatov has the ability to bring someone back to life, as it did with the Tzarfati's son, it likewise should have the capacity for preventing Moshe Rabbeinu's death. Hashem had no other recourse. He wants us to be makir tov to Moshe - so He had to allow him to continue living.

A compelling reason, an excellent argument, but it was not enough. Hashem had other plans. Moshe's time to leave this world had arrived. "b'etzem ha'yom ha'zeh," "on that very day," he was to take leave of his earthly abode - because this is what Hashem wanted.

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From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom List

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Shabbat\_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Yom Kippur Shabbat Shalom:

YOM KIPPUR

BY RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Efrat, Israel - What is the essential significance of Yom Kippur - especially since it doesn't seem to fit within the general universal theme of our Fall festivals. After all, the Jewish calendar is divided into two holiday periods: The Spring Passover - Shavuot season, which highlights the birth of the Jewish nation and our religio-legal heritage of Torah, and the Fall Rosh Hashana - Yom Kippur - Sukkot season, which emphasizes the creation of the world and the sacred character of all of nature as well of the seventy Gentile nations.

But Yom Kippur, the very center-piece of this period right in-between the Rosh Hashana vision of "perfecting the world under the Kingship of G-d" and the Sukkot waving of the four species of nature's bounty in all directions of the compass, seems to focus in on the very nationalistic purification of Israel and our narrowly religious rituals of the Holy Temple sacrifice. Why does Yom Kippur shift our attention from universalism to particularism?

I believe that the answer is to be found in the curious Torah reading of Rosh Hashana, the very beginning of our Festival period. One would expect us to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the world by publicly reading the first verses of Genesis, which majestically describe the first primordial week of creation. Indeed, the yearly cycle of Torah portion is nearing its end anyway with the advent of Rosh Hashana, so that it would be in complete accord with the pattern of the portions to celebrate our New Year by intoning, "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Instead we turn to the birth of Isaac on the first day of Rosh Hashana, and the binding of Isaac on the second. Why? What's the connection?

I believe that the Jewish message is most profound. The vision of Rosh Hashana is that we must perfect the imperfect (Latin, incomplete) world created by G-d, that we must accept responsibility as G-d's partners to "cause all the wicked of the earth to turn to ethical monotheism." But one begins perfecting the world by perfection of oneself; one re-creates the world by creating one's private world, one's family.

Yes, Rosh Hashana invokes the "macro" by praying for the time when "every creature will know that You (the G-d of love and compassion) created it, and every formed being will understand that you formed it." But the "macro" is comprised of many "micros"; re-create the world by re-creating yourself, re-direct the world by re-directing your family - towards the G-dly ideals of loving-Kindness, truth and peace. Indeed, on this very Sabbath of Repentance we invoke the figure of Elijah the Prophet, herald of redemption, declaring that his most awesome challenge and greatest accomplishment will be

"to turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents." If the Chinese taught that the longest march begins with the first mile, Rosh Hashana - Judaism teaches that perfection of world begins with perfection of one specific family!

It is told that a devoted disciple of Rav Yisrael Salanter, founder of the Ethicist (Mussar) Movement in Judaism, told his teacher of his desire to leave Lithuania and spread the ideals of perfecting one's ethical characteristics to the Jewish community in Berlin. "Are all of the people so perfect in our town of Salant that you can afford to go off to Germany? And are the people on your block so perfect that you can afford to teach in another part of town? Are the members of your family so deeply involved with ethicism that you can begin to preach to strangers? Are you yourself so morally and ethically developed that you can allow yourself to motivate others?" The message is hopefully indubitably clear: universal perfection must begin with personal and familial re-creation.

The second day's Torah reading, the binding of Isaac, continues this theme. Mount Moriah, the scene of the binding, is our Temple Mount, the most sacred locus in the Jewish tradition. Mount Moriah - even more than Mount Sinai. Although the Torah was given on Mount Sinai, Moses ascended that mountain alone; Abraham ascended Mount Moriah with his son Isaac, making it a familial rather than an individual experience. Moreover, G-d gave the Israelites the gift of Torah on Mount Sinai; Abraham and Isaac were willing to present G-d with a sacrifice on Mount Sinai. There can be no re-creation, there can be no perfection, without the willingness to sacrifice!

Rosh Hashana provides the universal vision, and its Torah reading explains the steps we must take to get there: sacrificially dedicating oneself and one's family to the ideals of ethical monotheism.

Yom Kippur is the Rosh Hashana Torah reading applied in practice. The individual retreats for a twenty-four hour period from the maelstrom - and majestic macrocosm - of the world around him. He understands that often by retreating we advance, by stepping back we step forward. He devotes a complete day to personal introspection and self-creation. As G-d revealed to Abraham and Isaac, when He demanded that Abraham not trick his son or do him any harm, the most profound sacrifice lies in living for G-d rather than in dying by His name. And so we fast on Yom Kippur, mindful that by so doing we all become veritable Isaacs, in accordance with the words of Rav Sheshet. After a fast: "Master of the Universe, at the time of the Holy Temple, a sinner would bring a sacrifice - by offering on the altar the fat and blood of the animal - and would be forgiven. Now I have fasted, and some of my fat and blood have been offered up to You. May this be accepted as though I had offered myself before You on the Temple Altar. Please accept me" (B. T. Brachot 17a).

Hopefully, Yom Kippur enables the individual to re-create himself in dedication to G-d's will. As the day nears close, we read the Book of Jonah - reminding us of our obligation to then reach out to the world, even to our enemies like Assyria, and teach them G-d's will. And if the Day of Forgiveness has succeeded, we are ready to confront the world of nature and nations on the festival of Sukkot, prepared to sanctify every aspect of creation and cosmos to the glory of the G-d of love and peace.

Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:  
<http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm>

Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean To subscribe, E-mail to: <[Shabbat\\_Shalom-on@ohrtorahstone.org.il](mailto:Shabbat_Shalom-on@ohrtorahstone.org.il)>

robe called a "kitel" together with a white head covering during the synagogue service; women wear white blouses and/or skirts and no jewelry) as a sign of purity and as a sign of our mortality, for ultimately we are buried in white shrouds. The white garments are also a reminder of the costume of the High Priest worn on Yom Kippur during most of the Yom Kippur service in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The main service was conducted then and there with the High Priest wearing the four white garments - shirt, pants, belt and hat - without the four gold garments - the long coat, the breastplate, the head plate and the apron - that he ordinarily wore in performing his Temple duties. The gold garments are not worn on this day of asking forgiveness because they represent hubris, human majesty and are a potential reminder of the sin of the Golden Calf. Yom Kippur is a day of humility and a low and private profile. Fancy garments, especially gold garments, are really out of place and contrary to the prevailing spirit of this holy day.

On Yom Kippur, Jews abstain from doing any work, from eating and drinking, from marital relations, from wearing leather shoes and from washing one's body. Maimonides classifies these abstinences as forms of "rest," for Yom Kippur is the ultimate day of rest - the Sabbath of Sabbaths. We rest from the world and our ordinary necessities on this day. The day is marked with this atmosphere of serenity, coupled with a seriousness of purpose, though not with any tinge of sadness. For it is on this day that we have our sins erased and forgiven, and thus it is an occasion of joy and not one of sadness. We confess our sins in the prayer services of Yom Kippur nine times (including the afternoon Mincha prayer before Yom Kippur) and we beseech heavenly understanding of our frailties and weaknesses. We also pledge ourselves to try and improve and to become better Jews and finer human beings. However, all of these confessions refer only to sins between our Creator and us - the sins it is within the power of Yom Kippur to absolve. Yet, Yom Kippur does not absolve sins that were committed against our fellow human beings. Those sins are erased only when the wronged party forgives us our acts or statements.

Thus it is customary for Jews before the advent of the Yom Kippur day to seek out those who they may have possibly wronged during the course of the year and request their understanding and forgiveness. It is wrong for a Jew to withhold such forgiveness if sincerely asked to do so. Only if we are willing to forgive each other can we then, in good conscience, ask God to forgive our sins as well.

In the times of the Temple in Jerusalem, the afternoon of Yom Kippur was a time for matchmaking for those interested in finding proper mates. It was felt that the holiness of the day would be a positive influence on those involved and allow them to find their true physical and spiritual soul mates. The enemies of Israel always marked Yom Kippur as a special day of hatred towards the Jews. From the execution of Rabbi Akiva by the Romans on Yom Kippur in Caesarea in 139CE, to the Holocaust and to the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Yom Kippur carries stark memories for the people of Israel. These memories have also been woven into the prayers of the day. The Kol Nidrei prayer that introduces the Yom Kippur prayer services has overtones of the plight of the Jewish conversos of Spain after the expulsion of 1492. This prayer nullifies false vows and coerced undertakings and allows all of Israel, sinners and saints, to pray as one. There is perhaps no other day on the Jewish calendar that so unifies the Jewish people as Yom Kippur. It creates social amity, the repairing of relationships between human beings, service of God and a sense of personal immortality and connection with the generations past and future. Yom Kippur is the quintessential Jewish day, unmatched and not replicated by any other faith or nation in the world.

Shabbat Shalom and fast well Berel Wein RabbiWein, Copyright 1 2002 by Rabbi Berel Wein and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org) 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208

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From: [rbwein@torah.org](mailto:rbwein@torah.org) September 12, 2002 10:03 AM To: [rabiwein@torah.org](mailto:rabiwein@torah.org)  
Subject: Rabbi Wein - Yom Kippur  
Past Perfect YOM KIPPUR by RABBI BEREL WEIN

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. It is a day of abstinence, of prayer and meditation, of introspection, soul-searching and repentance. It is called the Sabbath of Sabbaths - the ultimate day of spirit and serenity. Jews dress in white (men usually wear a white

From: National Council of Young Israel [YI\_Torah@lb.bcentral.com]  
Sent: September 11, 2002 Subject: Yom Kippur 10 Tishrei 5763  
September 16, 2002 Daf Yomi: Sanhedrin 5  
Guest Rabbi: RABBI YITZCHOK WYNE Young Israel of Las Vegas,  
NV

How can it be that Yom Kippur has as part of its primary observance, a mitzvah to "afflict oneself" (we do this by - fasting; abstaining from washing, anointing, and wearing leather shoes and by not engaging in marital relations) and at the same time be described by the gemorah as one of the happiest days of the year?

The answer should be clear to us. Yom Kippur is a day of tremendous love between G-d and man. It is a day that is designed to engender a very deep connection and feeling of closeness between us and our Father in Heaven. The Chovas HaLevovos explains that when a person sins, it should be immediate that the Al-Mighty would strike the person down and wipe him from existence. How could it be that the King of the universe should allow one of His servants to disobey a command and not be punished severely and quickly. It is however only through a supreme act of kindness and graciousness that HaShem gives us time before retribution is carried out. This time is so, that hopefully, the sinner will understand his crime, turn from his evil ways and repair the damage done to the relationship with his Creator. The opportunity to do tshuva for our mistakes is not only a tremendous chesed, but also shapes the character of the day. Even if one chooses not to take advantage of the opportunity, just the fact that HaShem allows us to come back to Him, and that He commands us to come back to Him, should be enough to stir even the most calloused of hearts. One time I was flying from Las Vegas to Edmonton. Sitting in the back of the plane, I realized that I was surrounded by a group of Baptist ministers. When men of cloth sit together, they talk about their clothes. After awhile and when we were all comfortable with one another, I turned to one of the ministers and asked him if after I die, will I be going to Hell? He responded by saying "technically yes, but I have my own ideas." I said, "Let's talk about the technicalities." After he explained his position, I asked this cadre of clergy if any of them have children. They were all newly married and the answer was no. At the time I had three boys and explained, "In my worst nightmares, there is nothing that I could imagine any of my children doing, that would compel me to permanently shut them out of my life. I'm a pretty nice guy, but I'm not more merciful than G-d. If I couldn't shut my children out, I can't conceive G-d shutting His children out." They didn't get it. The truth is that in Judaism there are situations that a person could lose their share in the world to come. The message of this day is that as long as a person is alive it is never too late to repair the relationship with HaShem, and cleanse oneself from their sins.

There are two parts to this process: the first is tshuva and the second, is developing a true identification with Klall Yisrael. There are four steps to the tshuva process: stop doing the mistake, regret ever having done the mistake, make a commitment to never do it again and finally, verbally confessing the mistake to G-d. Most people spend most of Yom Kippur focusing only on this. Developing a true identification with the Jewish People in some ways is actually more difficult. The mishna says that "All of the Jewish People have a share in the world to come." The deeper connection one has with our people, the deeper connection he will have with HaShem and that will be reflected in their portion in the world to come.

This idea is alluded to in the viduy prayers. All of the viduy is said in the plural. This is because even though I did not steal or slander, somewhere out there is a Jew who did. I am confessing for him. But if I didn't do it, how can I confess for him? The answer is that we are all responsible for one another. To what extent? If we were doing what we were supposed to be doing, we would have such a positive influence on the rest of our nation, that no one would steal or slander. Therefore when we confess, it is not that we did the crime, it is that we didn't exert a positive enough influence towards our neighbor, to prevent him from doing the crime!

Why would I want to accept this kind of responsibility? If it's important to G-d; it's important to me. The Jewish People are important to G-d therefore the Jewish People MUST be important to me.

The person who identifies with the Jewish People so deeply and who does tshuva and returns to his Creator, will surely feel the intense love that our Father in heaven has for all of us. Yom Kippur will then truly be the happiest day of our year.

Sponsored by the Henry, Bertha and Edward Rothman Foundation:  
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From: Ohr Somayach [ohr@ohr.edu] Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2002 4:33 PM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Ha'azinu

\* TORAH WEEKLY \* from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu  
Sponsored by the Kof-K Kosher Supervision www.kof-k.org |  
info@kof-k.org

#### INSIGHTS

This is the first Shabbat of the year. It is the prototype, the blueprint for the whole year. Because of this, we must be especially careful to guard its sanctity. The Talmud tells us that if the Jewish People had kept the first Shabbat properly, no nation could have ruled over them.

On Rosh Hashanah a new order is created for all the days of the year. Thus if the first Shabbat of the year is correctly observed, then the whole year follows suit.

Man was created on Erev Shabbat, on Friday afternoon, in order that he could immediately enter straight into Shabbat. But before Shabbat came, Man had already sinned.

Shabbat is an aid to teshuva. As our Sages teach (Berachot 37), a tzaddikgamur (completely righteous person) cannot stand in the place of a ba'al teshuva (someone who returns to Judaism).

Tzaddikim uphold the world, as it says in Proverbs "The tzaddik is the foundation of the world," but "teshuva preceded the world" (Pesachim 54) so the level of the ba'al teshuva is before the world and above the world.

Just as the ba'al teshuva is before the world, and thus above it, so too Shabbat has a radiance which is higher than the seven days of the week - a reflection of the world to come.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair (C) 2002 Ohr Somayach International www.ohr.edu

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From: Eretz Hemdah [eretzhem@netvision.net.il] Sent: September 10, 2002 Subject: Hemdat Yamim Ha'azinu-Shuva Hemdat Yamim Ha'azinu-Shuva 8 Tishrei 5763 This edition of Hemdat Yamim is dedicated to the memory of R' Meir ben Yechezkel Shraga Brachfeld o.b.m Eretz Hemdah is the premier institution for training young rabbi's to take the Israeli Rabbinat's rigorous Yadin Yadin examinations. Eretz Hemdah, with its distinctive blend of Religious Zionist philosophy and scholarship coupled with community service, ensures its graduates emerge with the finest training, the noblest motivations and the strongest connection to Jewish communities worldwide.

#### DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER / HARAV MOSHE EHRENREICH

The gemara (Rosh Hashana 16b) says: "Three books are opened on Rosh Hashana, one of the fully wicked, one of the fully righteous, and one of average people (beinonim). The fully righteous are promptly inscribed and sealed for life. The fully wicked are promptly inscribed and sealed for death. The beinonim are left hanging from Rosh Hashana until Yom Kippur. If they merit, they are written for life. If they do not merit, they are written for death." The Rambam (Teshuva 3:3) adds on that the beinonim are sealed for life only if they do teshuva. It is difficult to understand the need for three books, according to the gemara's description. The books of the righteous and the wicked both contain people, but it seems that the book of beinonim is only a waiting list for those about whom it has not been decided if they belong to the righteous or the wicked. Another famous question is asked on the Rambam. Why is it necessary for beinonim to do teshuva in order to merit life? Why can't they just elevate their actions so that the week plus until Yom Kippur provides them with more merits than liabilities? Rav Charlop (Mei Marom, Ori V'Yishi 64) provides the following fundamental answer to the first question. There are indeed people who

are permanently inscribed as beinonim. However, some beinonim are also inscribed for life, while others are less fortunate. One must realize, though, that a beinoni who is inscribed for life is not a tzaddik, and his neshama suffers from the reality of being among the beinonim. If we incorporate to this approach one of the famous answers to the second question, we can say as follows. The days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur contain a special power to do teshuva. On the one hand, one who does not do teshuva cannot be sufficiently helped by standard good deeds to survive. On the other hand, one who makes full use of the opportunity to do teshuva out of love can elevate himself and turn "aveirot into virtues." Under those circumstances, he can extricate himself from the status of beinoni and be considered a tzaddik. It turns out that one's work of the ten Days of Repentance is to achieve one of the following possibilities: 1. To ensure that he ends the judgment period as at least a beinoni who merits life. 2. To arouse oneself to a sufficient level of teshuva to enable joining the book of the righteous. May we all merit to be inscribed and sealed in the book of the fully righteous and merit life, in its fullest and most fulfilling sense.

Moreshet Shaul (from the works of HAGAON HARAV SHAUL YISRAELI zt"l)  
DRASHA FOR SHABBAT SHUVA 5703 (adapted from D'rashot Layamim Hanoraim, pg. 45)

"You will serve there gods, the makings of man, of wood and stone... and you will seek out Hashem your G-d from there and you will find when you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Devarim 4:28-29). Sometimes specifically from the low of gods of wood and stone, one can reach for Hashem. When walking on the earth, the further away you get from a point from one direction, the closer you get from the opposite direction. Wood and stone are two forms of idolatry-like misconceptions that exist today. Wood, the growing tree, has a modern model in the philosophy of labor, to which many Jews in Israel subscribe, that they can accomplish anything through their own efforts, without Divine assistance. The stone represents the philosophy of the Soviet regime in which Jews were involved, where all compassion for our fellow person is to be removed from the heart, and the heart is to turn into stone. From both of these camps, we see signs of sobering and a desire to return to a better path. However, disenchantment is only half the task, and they still need to find the proper direction. In our camp, we have a solid foundation of faith and Torah values. If we were to feel a need for teshuva, we would know where to go. However, we are dozing and do not feel the need for teshuva. The navi Yeshaya already described our disease. "Since this nation approaches Me with its mouth... but its heart is far from Me, and their fear of Me is like the learned (melumadah) command of men. Therefore, I will continue to do wonders against this nation, wonder upon wonder, and the wisdom of the wise shall be lost" (Yeshaya 29:13-14). It is clear that the navi was criticizing those who were involved in a religious lifestyle. What is the problem with the learned fear of Hashem, something we are commanded to do (Devarim 14:23; ibid. 4:10)? Are we not to learn from people? The distinction is as follows. The proper study of the fear of Hashem is as the Torah instructs the king: "It [the Torah scroll] will be with him and he will read from it all the days of his life in order that he learn to fear Hashem..." (Devarim 17:19). The study must be continuous all of one's life. "Melumadah" implies a completed study, without a need to further develop one's understanding. There is a tendency to not only make due with the level of faith which one received in grade school, but to believe that there is nothing beyond that. Under such circumstances, the wisdom of the wise will indeed be lost, as the navi says, because no one feels a need to learn from them. After all, there appears to be nothing more that is worthwhile to learn! Teshuva is another mitzva that everyone knows about but is also "learned." In that atmosphere, a person can beat his chest all day, but the heart isn't affected one bit. In contrast, Yoel (2:13) tells us: "Tear your hearts and not your clothes." Against these tendencies, the days of teshuva present the imperative, "Renew (chidsho) your actions in this month (chodesh)." Refresh yourself, examine yourself, and be prepared to set yourselves anew.

Give a fresh look at the words of tefilla, as the service of Hashem of these days requires, and overcome the tendency to be "melumadah."

Harav Shaul Israeli zt"l Founder and President Deans: Harav Yosef Carmel Harav Moshe Ehrenreich ERETZ HEMDAH 5 Ha-Mem Gimmel St. P.O.B 36236 Jerusalem 91360 Tel/Fax: 972-2-5371485 Email: erezthem@netvision.net.il web-site: www.erezhemdah.org

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From: Aish.com [newsletterServer@aish.com] Sent: September 11, 2002 Subject: High Holidays  
TESHUVA: DRY-CLEANING FOR THE SOUL  
Aish.com High Holidays Home Page:  
[http://www.aish.com/holidays/the\\_high\\_holidays/default.asp](http://www.aish.com/holidays/the_high_holidays/default.asp) Yom Kippur begins Sunday evening, Sep. 15, and continues until Monday evening, Sept 16, 2002. A Struggle for Survival Many hundreds of families in Israel are struggling for survival. On top of the security situation, they suffer from the economic crises it has created. Please help by giving them the support they need for the coming High Holidays  
<http://kerenyehoshuavyisroel.com/>  
TESHUVA: DRY CLEANING FOR THE SOUL  
BY: RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS

Many people misunderstand the concept of sin. They think someone who sins is a "bad person."

Actually, the Hebrew word chet does not mean sin at all. Chet appears in the Bible in reference to a slingshot which "missed the target." There is nothing inherently "bad" about that slingshot! Rather, a mistake was made -- due to a lack of focus, concentration or skill.

The same is true with us. When we engage in irresponsible or destructive behavior, we have simply misfired. Every human being has a soul, a pure piece of Godliness that distinguishes us from the animals. When we do something wrong, it is because the soul's "voice" has become temporarily muted by the roar of the physical body. This confusion is what we call the "Yetzer Hara." But our essence remains pure. We only need to make a few adjustments -- and we're back on target!

This is the idea of teshuva. Teshuva literally means "return." When we "do teshuva," we examine our ways, identify those areas where we are losing ground, and "return" to our own previous state of spiritual purity. And in the process, we "return" to our connection with the Almighty as well.

The process of teshuva involves the following four steps:

Step 1 - Regret. Realize the extent of the damage and feel sincere regret.

Step 2 - Cessation. Immediately stop the harmful action.

Step 3 - Confession. Articulate the mistake and ask for forgiveness.

Step 4 - Resolution. Make a firm commitment not to repeat it in the future.

Now let's examine each of these steps in-depth.

STEP 1: REGRET

Sometimes, we try to justify our actions, using a variety of excuses:

"Everyone else is doing it"

"At least I'm not like some people who go around killing and stealing!"

"Who are YOU to say it's wrong?!"

Regret is not really possible unless we can clearly distinguish between right and wrong. Otherwise, we will just rationalize and delude ourselves into thinking we've done nothing wrong. The ever-changing, sliding standards of society contribute to this lack of clarity.

For example, imagine growing up in a house where gossip was constantly spoken. Unless you're introduced to the Jewish idea of Loshon Hara ("negative speech") and made aware of its destructive nature, you may otherwise never consider gossip to be wrong!

(For this reason, it is important to be familiar with halacha, Jewish law, and to have a rabbi who knows you personally and can advise you.)

How should we feel upon recognizing a mistake? Should we feel guilty, worthless and bad? No! "Guilt" is the negative emotion saying

that "I am bad." Whereas "regret" is the positive acknowledgement that while my essence remains pure, I have failed to live up to my potential.

Feeling regret is a positive sign that we're back in touch with our Godly essence. Our conscience will not let us relax until we've corrected the mistake. Would an evil person feel regret over a transgression?

This first step of teshuva is indeed the most crucial -- because unless a person feels regret, he will most likely continue in his errant ways.

#### STEP 2: CESSATION

The Talmud says:

A person who made a mistake and admits it, but does not renounce doing it again, is compared to going into the mikveh holding a dead reptile in his hand. For although he may immerse himself in all the waters of the world, his immersion is useless. However, if he throws [the reptile] out of his hand, then upon immersing in 40 se'ahs of water (the minimum size of a mikveh), his immersion immediately becomes effective. (Ta'anit 16a)

Can you imagine trying to ask forgiveness from someone while you continue to wrong him at the same time? Without stopping the bad action, all the heart-pounding in the whole world won't help.

#### STEP 3: CONFESSION AND ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS

In admitting our mistake, Jewish law prescribes that it be articulated verbally. ArtScroll's Yom Kippur Machzor gives a beautiful explanation of why this is so crucial to the teshuva process:

As an intelligent, thinking, imaginative being, man has all sorts of thoughts flashing constantly through his mind. Even sublime thoughts of remorse and self-improvement are not strange to him, but they do not last. For his thoughts to have lasting meaning, he must distill them into words, because the process of thought culminates when ideas are expressed and clarified.

That is not as easy as it sounds. It is usually excruciatingly difficult for people to admit explicitly that they have done wrong. We excuse ourselves. We refuse to admit the truth. We shift blame. We deny the obvious. We excel at rationalizing. But the person who wrenches from himself the unpleasant truth, "I have sinned," has performed a great and meaningful act.

The Torah requires us to be humble and contrite as we ask forgiveness. This is crucial in enabling the "victim" to heal. Has someone ever apologized to you and you knew it was not sincere? Just grunting the words "I'm sorry" is not enough.

Even secular courts are now adopting this principle; some judges are requiring that criminals demonstrate sincere regret and formally apologize to their victims before the court will consider shortening the sentence.

#### STEP 4: RESOLUTION NOT TO REPEAT

On Yom Kippur, we say two prayers ("Asham'nu" and "Al Chet") which contain an extensive list of mistakes. As a matter of fact, as you go through these lists, you'll see the mention of mistakes covering every conceivable aspect of life! This begs the question: By saying these prayers, are we in effect making a commitment to never sin ever again? Is this realistic?

Imagine a new child taking his first steps in front of the proud parents. He gets to his feet, takes a few steps -- and falls flat on his face. The parents clap with excitement and joy. But if you analyze the scenario, shouldn't the parents be upset? After all, the child fell down!

The answer is obvious. A parent doesn't judge a child based on whether he walks or falls, but rather on whether he took a few steps in the right direction.

So, too, with the Almighty. We are not in competition with anyone but ourselves. What concerns Him is whether we're making a sincere effort to move in the right direction. God doesn't ask you to change in an area that is not yet feasible for you to change. We are commanded to be human beings, not angels. This means making a serious commitment to change --- and taking the right steps at the right time.

An individual doesn't need to have all the answers right now. The key is the commitment to change. Be aware of situations in which you're likely to stumble, and keep a safe distance from them. The Torah tells us: Strengthen your resolve in a certain area and God will

ensure your success. Nothing that can stand in the way of persistence and determination. As the Talmud (Makkot 10b) says, "In the way that a person wants to go, he will be led." Copyright 2002 Aish.com

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From: Aish.com [newsletterServer@aish.com] Sent: September 12, 2002 Subject: High Holidays - ABC's of Yom Kippur Aish.com High Holidays Home Page:

[http://www.aish.com/holidays/the\\_high\\_holidays/default.asp](http://www.aish.com/holidays/the_high_holidays/default.asp)

Yom Kippur begins Sunday evening, Sep. 15, and continues until Monday evening, Sept 16, 2002.

#### ABC'S OF YOM KIPPUR

BY: MARSHALL ROTH

#### ANGEL FOR A DAY

What are "angels?" Angels are completely spiritual beings, whose sole focus is to serve their Creator.

On Yom Kippur, every Jew becomes like an angel. As the Maharal of Prague explains:

"All of the mitzvot that God commanded us on [Yom Kippur] are designed to remove, as much as possible, a person's relationship to physicality, until he is completely like an angel."

Just as angels (so to speak) stand upright, so too we spend most of Yom Kippur standing in the synagogue. And just as angels (so to speak) wear white, so too we are accustomed to wear white on Yom Kippur. Just as angels do not eat or drink, so too, we do not eat or drink.

#### FIVE ASPECTS

There are five areas of physical involvement which we remove ourselves from on Yom Kippur. They are:

Eating and Drinking Washing Applying oils or lotions to the skin Marital Relations Wearing Leather Shoes

Throughout the year, many people spend their days focusing on almost nothing else besides food, sex, work, superficial material possessions (symbolized by shoes) and superficial pleasures (symbolized by anointing). On Yom Kippur, we restore our priorities to what really counts in life.

As Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler writes:

"On Yom Kippur, the power of the evil inclination is muted. Therefore, one's yearning for spiritual elevation reasserts itself, after having lain dormant as a result of sin's deadening effect on the soul. This rejuvenation of purpose entitles a person to special consideration and forgiveness."

#### TESHUVA AND FORGIVENESS

Following the Golden Calf, Moses pleaded with God to forgive the people. Finally on Yom Kippur, atonement was achieved and Moses brought the second set of Tablets down from Mount Sinai.

From that day forward, every Yom Kippur has carried with it a special power to cleanse the mistakes of Jews (both individually and collectively) and to wipe the slate clean.

Though while Yom Kippur atones for transgressions against God, this does not include wrongs committed against other human beings. It is therefore the universal Jewish custom - some time before Yom Kippur -- to apologize and seek forgiveness from any friends, relative, or acquaintances whom we may have harmed or insulted over the past year.

#### THE FAST ITSELF

The Yom Kippur fast begins at sundown, and extends 25 hours until the following nightfall.

The afternoon before Yom Kippur, it is a special mitzvah to eat a festive meal.

As far as making your fast easier in general, try to pace your intake throughout the previous day by eating something every two hours. At the festive meal itself, eat a moderate portion of food so as not to speed up the digestion process. Also, don't drink any coffee or coke, because caffeine is a diuretic. Heavy coffee drinkers can also avoid the dreaded headache by slowly reducing the amount of coffee consumption over the week leading up to Yom Kippur.

After a meal we generally get thirstier, so when you complete the festive meal, leave some extra time before sundown to drink. Also,



drinking lukewarm water with some sugar in it can help make you less thirsty during the fast.

#### IN CASE OF ILLNESS

If someone is ill, and a doctor is of the opinion that fasting might pose a life-danger, then the patient should eat or drink small amounts.

The patient should try to eat only about 60 cc., and wait nine minutes before eating again. Once nine minutes have passed, he can eat this small amount again, and so on throughout the day.

With drinking, he should try to drink less than what the Talmud calls "melo lugmav" -- the amount that would fill a person's puffed-out cheek. While this amount will vary from person to person, it is approximately 80 cc., and he should wait nine minutes before drinking again.

How does consuming small amounts make a difference? In Jewish law, an act of "eating" is defined as "consuming a certain quantity within a certain period of time." Otherwise, it's not eating, it's "nibbling" -- which although it's also prohibited on Yom Kippur, there is room to be lenient when one's health is at stake.

The reason for all these technicalities is because eating on Yom Kippur is regarded as one of the most serious prohibitions in the Torah. So while there are leniencies in certain situations, we still try to minimize it.

Note that eating and drinking are treated as independent acts, meaning that the patient can eat and drink together during those nine minutes, and the amounts are not combined.

Having said all this, if these small amounts prove insufficient, the patient may even eat and drink regularly. In such a case, a person does not say Kiddush before eating, but does recite "Grace After Meals," inserting the "ya'aleh veyavo" paragraph.

Now what about a case where the patient's opinion conflicts with that of the doctor? If the patient is certain he needs to eat to prevent a danger to health, then we rely on his word, even if the doctor disagrees. And in the opposite scenario -- if the patient refuses to eat despite doctors' warnings -- then we persuade the patient to eat, since it is possible that his judgment is impaired due to illness.

Wishing you an easy fast and a meaningful Yom Kippur!  
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