



During the Ten Days of Teshubah we ask Hashem for life. During our busy schedules we tend to take life for granted. On the night of Yom Kippur, all Jews around the world recite the *Kal Nidre*. *Kal Nidre* is another form of *hatarat nedarim*, which is an annulment of vows. Tradition has it that the *Kal Nidre* service originated in Spain. The Jews had a glorious period of growth and prosperity until the terrible Spanish Inquisition began. Many good Jews were forced to accept Christianity in order to save their lives. On the night of Yom Kippur they would secretly gather in caves and basements. There they would recite in front of all the people the words of *Kal Nidre*, to annul all of the vows of Christianity that they were forced to accept. What a struggle these people went through! How fortunate are we.

As I have mentioned many times, we must ask Hashem on a daily basis for long life with good health. In our prayer of  $\sigma\eta\eta\phi\kappa \upsilon\beta\eta\rho\phi\zeta$ , Remember us for life, we ask for life. However, we must have a clear definition of life in our minds as we ask for it. Rabbi Matityahu Solomon once said: life means different things for different people. For most people it means simply to live. However, to some people their house is their life. To some their car is their life, and to others, their baseball team is their life. A person must avoid making these things so important that they become that person's "life-wish," prompting Hashem to answer this foolish wish instead of granting him the most important gift of life.

May Hashem grant us all long life in good health, Amen. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## Some Reminders for Yom Kippur

**Kaparot** - It is customary to take money or a live chicken and turn it around one's head prior to Yom Kippur. If money is used it should go to charity. See prayer on back page.

**Candlelighting** - Candles are lit on the eve of Yom Kippur. The *berachah* is "*Lehadleek Ner Shel Yom Hakippurim*." If the woman who lights is going to synagogue by car she must light before she goes saying the following before lighting: "I do not accept upon myself the sanctity of the holiday with the lighting of the candles, but I will accept it after entering the synagogue." If she is not going to synagogue, the statement is not needed. However, since she is staying home she must say the *berachah* of "*Shehehiyanu*" after she lights the candles. Be sure to remove leather shoes prior to lighting.

**Ereb Yom Kippur** - Just as it is a *misvah* to fast on Yom Kippur, it is also a *misvah* to eat the day before Yom Kippur. We will have *minhah* prayers at **3:30 & 4:00 p.m.** with *Taleet* and *Tefillin*. Memorial lights will be available at the synagogue. We will then go home and have our final meal. We should finish by **6:42 p.m.** so that we can get back to shul and accept the holidays a few minutes before sunset. The men should put on their *taleeteem* with a *berachah* before **6:55 p.m.** One may NOT drive to shul or do any other work after this time.

**Yom Kippur** - On this holiday we have the opportunity to cleanse ourselves of all our sins. A feeling of repentance and remorse together with sincere prayers makes this forgiveness possible. In order to set the stage for this holy experience Hashem wants us to follow these following rules. We are not to eat or drink. We are not to wear leather shoes. We are not to wash with water. We are not to apply oils or perfumes to our skin. We are not to have marital relations. May the merit of the observance of these laws bring a complete forgiveness from Hashem.

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## Heaven Help Us

”וְאִפְסָ עֲצוּר וְעֹזֵב”

“And no one (feels that they) will be saved or assisted.” (Deuteronomy 32:36)

The *Talmud* in Sanhedrin explains that this *pasuk* refers to the time of Israel's redemption. The *Talmud* states, based on this *pasuk*, that the *Mashiah* will not come until the Jews have abandoned hope of redemption.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky asks, “How is it possible that a prerequisite for the actual deliverance will be the total abandonment of a very basic tenet of Judaism - hope for redemption? What does the *Talmud* mean when it says that the *Mashiah* will not arrive until the Jewish people “lose all hope of redemption”

Rabbi Yaakov Rubin, the Brizdovitz Rav in Brooklyn is known for his wisdom and warmth in nurturing many Russian immigrants in this country. One of the families that he endeared was an amazing family of Russian immigrants who, despite Communist oppression remained strongly committed to Judaism. In fact, the Rav hosted the family for a *Sheva Berachot* for this family's daughter and her new groom.

During the meal the Rav rose to speak. He praised the incredible perseverance of this family and during his speech he discussed the Divine providence that helped them get out of Russia. “*Baruch Hashem*,” said the Rav “The Almighty helped them and they got out of Russia...” Suddenly a booming voice in a Russian accent interrupted.

It was the father of the bride. “THE ALMIGHTY DID NOT HELP US!” The Rav froze and stammered... “I mean, with the assistance of the Almighty...” Again the voice boomed: “THE ALMIGHTY DID NOT ASSIST US!”

Eyes darted from the Rav and back to the man. The Rav was stammering, the man was glowering. Suddenly the Russian man smiled widely as he spoke softly. “Listen carefully. Hashem did not help us! Hashem did not assist us! He did EVERYTHING!”

Rav Yaakov explains: The *Talmud* does not mean that *Mashiah* will not arrive until we have abandoned hope of any redemption. It means that *Mashiah* will not arrive until we have abandoned hope of other types of redemption! As long as we rely on ourselves, our machinations and own abilities, then we are proclaiming self-reliance, and *Mashiah* will then lock himself in his proverbial room and wait. Only when we realize that redemption is truly only in His hands will Hashem send the true redemption! (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

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## You Can't Hide

During *Minhah* of Yom Kippur, we read the Book of Yonah. Yonah the prophet was ordered by Hashem to go to Nineveh and warn the people that if they did not repent, they would be punished. He refused this mission with good intention. Should the people of Nineveh, who were not Jewish, have heeded him, it would have had an adverse reflection upon the Jewish people who had defied the warnings and exhortations of the prophets. Yonah meant well, but our Sages tell us he was wrong to defend the honor of the child (Israel) rather than the honor of the Father (Hashem).

To accomplish his goal he decided to flee to Tarshish. He chose a destination outside of *Eretz Yisrael* because there Hashem does not reveal himself to prophets. Hashem thwarted his endeavors, and arranged that he be cast into the sea. There he was swallowed up by a large fish and spewed out on dry land. Ultimately he went to Nineveh and warned them of their imminent destruction due to their bad behavior.

*Minhah* is the last prayer of the day before *Ne'ilah* - the closing prayer. As we prepare to part with this very holy day, we read the story of Yonah which conveys the powerful message that there is no running away from Hashem. Hashem in His

miraculous ways can find us wherever we are and our endeavors to flee Him are purposeless and to no avail. The Book of Yonah serves as a call not to run away from Hashem during the year, but resolve to adhere tenaciously to Hashem and Torah throughout the entire year. (*Vedibarta Bam*)

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### *Small Talk*

In the town of Radin, there was a fellow in his fifties who never managed to get married. Yom Kippur was a very lonely time for him. In Europe, the *Kol Nidrei* service would finish well before 9:00 and people would return to their homes. On Shabbat and