

PRAYER

All that we ought to have thought,

And have not thought

And that we ought to have said,

And have not said,

All that we ought to have done,

And have not done:

All that we ought not to have thought,

And yet have thought,

All that we ought not to have done,

And yet have done,

For thoughts, words, and works,

Pray we, O God, for forgiveness.

From an ancient Persian prayer

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

If you don't change *today* – your tomorrows will be
like your *yesterdays*.

Unknown



October 1, 2011

ג תשרי תשע"ב

Shabbat Shuvah שבת שובה

Parashat Ha'azinu – Deuteronomy 32:1-52 (האזינו)

Hertz p 896

Stone p 1100

Haftarah – Hosea 14:2-10 (הושע)

Joel 2:11-27 (יואל)

Micah 7:18-20 (מיכה)

Hertz – p 891

Stone – p 1204

Kiddush sponsored by Sisterhood

Cake provided by Bill & Nanci Gold

In honor of the 7th birthday of

Hayley Lerner

Rabbi Gordon's Talmud Class – 4:30 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit sponsored by

Fred & Lili Chait

in memory of Lili's brother, Daniel Tabarya

Minchah – 5:45 PM

Shabbat Ends – 7:28 PM

On This Week's Torah Portion - האזינו

Ki chelek H" amo / For Gd's portion is His People / For His People are part of Gd (32:9)

I once read a *drash* on Parashat HaAzinu that described it as "our national anthem." In some way the Song that takes up the bulk of the Parashah must define our national essence. What then *is* that essence?

The general structure of the Song is the same as that of Creation – it begins with a section that details Gd's goodness to and closeness with Israel, followed by a section that describes Israel's distancing itself from Gd and Gd's reaction to that distancing. Finally, it concludes with Israel's repentance and Gd's forgiveness, and the reconstruction of the relationship at a higher level of intimacy and integration. This echoes our understanding of the process of creation itself, as described by our esoteric tradition. Gd, alone in His Unity, "contracts" within His own nature to allow "space" for finite beings to exist. Part of this creation is humankind, which, unique among all living beings (terrestrial or celestial), can use its free will to bridge the "distance" between the finite and the infinite, and "re-integrate" Gd and His Creation.

I believe Israel's great mission in this entire drama is focused on the third stage – the reintegration of creation and Creator – also known as *tikun olam* (rectification of the world). This rectification takes place, I believe, primarily on the level of awareness. Of all Gd's creatures, human beings appear to be the only ones who can become self-aware to the extent that we can form a relationship with Gd. We can *recognize* Gd, and in doing so, we recognize ourselves as participating in Gd's infinite nature.

I believe this is reflected in the ambiguity of the first passage, which I have indicated by translating it a bit differently (2nd translation) than the usual way it is rendered (from the *Artscroll Chumash*). The plain meaning of the text is a statement that the Jewish people are Gd's special treasure – the "chosen people," with a special job to do. On Rosh HaShanah, which comes right before Shabbat HaAzinu, we "coronate" Gd as our King and as King of the universe – that is, we proclaim that the entire creation comes from Gd and belongs to Gd. Just as humankind is special in that human beings can comprehend that they are creatures and can come into a relationship with their Creator, so Israel is special among humankind in that our special national *tafkid* is to be Gd's agents in the physical world actively to bring about this relationship, not just among ourselves, but for all people. This is expressed beautifully in the *Alenu* prayer, which is prominently featured in the Rosh HaShanah liturgy, and which of course appears in each and every prayer service, as a kind of charge to us as we leave the synagogue to go out into the world.

The second translation I believe represents an additional, higher level of awareness. In the first translation, we see ourselves as Gd's agents, and there is a Talmudic principle that a person's agent is like himself. Thus, in accepting Gd's mission we become, as it were, like Gd, able to act in Gd's Name as if He were acting directly. (This is why it is so important that we act properly at all times – we are not just representing ourselves or even the Jewish people, but we are representing Gd Himself!) On a higher level, we realize that we are a part of Gd's Essence – that the entire creation drama is, on some level, a bit illusory. Does Gd really "contract" within Himself? Is there really a "space" or a "distance" between us and Gd? Only on the level of our limited perception! The reality is, from Gd's perspective He is all there ever was or ever will be. If Gd is hidden from us, it is because we don't know how to look, or because we have clouded and closed the windows of perception through our misguided actions. The purpose of our life, and especially these Ten Days of *T'shuvah*, is to clear our perception so that we see through the veil that appears to block us from contact with Gd, and to understand that there was, in fact, *never* a separation between the Creator and His creation.

This holiday season gives us plenty of time to learn to "cleave to HaShem." We are exhorted to do *t'shuvah*, that is, to *return* to Gd and to Torah. In Richard Bach's *Jonathon Livingston Seagull* the wise old bird tells Jonathon, "Perfect speed is being there." Perhaps our one, ambiguous verse in HaAzinu is telling us "Perfect returning is never having left."

A sweet New Year and an easy, meaningful Fast!

*Shabbat shalom,
Rafi Rabinoff*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sun. Oct. 2 *Tzom Gedaliah*, Fast Day

Sunday, Oct. 2 "Travel Me Jewish" Informational Meeting for parents/teens to discuss Jewish travel experience program, 10:00 AM

Sunday, Oct. 2 Membership Committee Meeting for those who would like to help solicit ads for our new Directory. If you always want to help and need a short-term project, this is it. 10:00 AM. If you would like to help but can't make the meeting, call Elaine Farkas at 314-439-9747 or 954-558-1159.

Sunday, Oct. 2 Stitch 'N Schmooze, 10:00 AM. Time to get knitting!

Tues. Oct 4 Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism for the US State Dept. speaks on "Passionate Leadership," 7:30 PM, The Plaza in Clayton. \$18 includes dessert reception, call Karen Sher to register, 314-442-3824.

Tues. Oct. 4 Rabbi Shalom Paul, "What Makes Jonah Run?" at Brodsky Library, 7:30 PM. Rabbi Paul is a renowned Dead Sea Scrolls scholar. Reception follows lecture, \$7/person, RSVP by 10/3, 314-442-3720.

Kol Nidre Food Drive Please bring bags filled with food for the Jewish Food Pantry no later than Friday, Oct. 7 **before *Kol Nidre***

YOM HAKIPPURIM

Friday, October 7

Minchah 2:00 pm; Candle Lighting no later than 6:17 PM
(Those who wish to light candles at home before the start of *Yom HaKippurim* and then ride to *shul* may do so. Lighting candles does not cause *Shabbat* or Holydays to begin; it is a pre-*Shabbat* or pre-Holyday act.)
KOL NIDRE Service 6:10 PM SHARP

Shabbat, October 8

Shacharit 9:00 AM; *Torah* Reading and *Haftarah* followed by Rabbi's Message 11:00 AM; Youth Services 11:00 AM; *YIZKOR* 12:30 PM; *Musaf* 1:00 PM; Adult Discussion Group 2:30 PM: "When Did the Shoah Begin?" presented by Paul Tesser

BREAK

Minchah 4:30 PM; *Ne'ilah* 5:45 PM; *Arvit* and *Havdalah* 7:08 PM
Havdalah & Teki'at Shofar 7:27 PM

Sukkot begins Wednesday, October 12 Minchah/Arvit 6:00 PM

Motzei Shabbat, September 15 ***Sukkot Campfire***, 8:00 PM. S'mores, snacks, schmoozing. No charge, sponsored by Youth Committee

DAILY SERVICE TIMES (see special times above for *Yom HaKippurim*)

Sunday morning – 9:00 AM

Monday–Friday morning – 7:00 AM

Monday-Thursday evening – **6:15 PM**

Friday 10/7 Minchah – 2:00 PM

Friday evening 10/7 – 6:10 PM