

Thought of the Week

Amongst the most stirring of the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur liturgy is the prayer known as "unesaneh tokef". Equally heart-rending is the history behind the composition of the poem. The Ohr Zaruah records that the author of the prayer was Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, the greatest Rabbi of his generation, who lived in the ninth century.

The bishop of Mainz, holding Rabbi Amnon in great esteem, attempted to convert him. In order to stall for time, Rabbi Amnon requested three days in which to contemplate the matter. As soon as the words left his mouth, Rabbi Amnon became distraught and begged Hashem's forgiveness for the grave sin which he had committed. After three days, Rabbi Amnon refused to appear before the bishop, who then had him brought by force. When he refused to convert, the bishop ordered all his limbs to be severed, joint by joint. He was then sent home, along with his body parts, to die. Rabbi Amnon was able to cling to life until Rosh Hashana, and he asked that he be brought to the synagogue before Kedusha. When the cantor reached the recitation of the Kedusha, Rabbi Amnon asked him to wait. He then recited "unesaneh tokef" and passed away. Three days later, Rabbi Amnon appeared in a dream before the great Kabbalist, Rabbi Kolonymous ben Meshulam, asking him to ensure that all of Jewry would incorporate his prayer into their Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur liturgy.

What was Rabbi Amnon's sin and why did he only realize his mistake after the words left his mouth?

The Rambam lists the offenses for which a person must sacrifice his life, rather than transgressing them. Although it is axiomatic to Jewish law that preservation of life supersedes even the fulfillment of mitzvos, as is written in the Torah, "and by which he will live" - one should live by performing the commandments and not die, those transgressions which result in the desecration of Hashem's name require the highest sacrifice of man, his very life. Among the transgressions mentioned is the performance of idol worship. It could be asked why it is necessary to give up one's life in order to avoid this particular transgression, since idol worship is a sin of the mind. What would be the severity of the transgression if one were to simply go through the motions without the intention of serving another deity? The Rambam answers that even if a Jew does not actually believe in another deity, but goes through the motions, the perception that he was willing to serve the foreign god is the ultimate desecration of Hashem's name. Rabbi Amnon initially reasoned that he could stall for time by not immediately responding to the bishop's proposal. However, when Rabbi Amnon saw that the bishop was satisfied with the knowledge that he was contemplating acquiescing to the bishop's demand, he realized that this perception alone, the perception that a Jew might forsake his Creator, was a desecration of Hashem's name.

The Sefer Hachinuch adds a new dimension as to why a person is required to sacrifice his life in order to avoid acquiescing to the demand that he worship another deity. It is not sufficient, writes the Chinuch, to believe in...

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בס"ד

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Yom Kippur
September 17-18

יום כפור
י" תשרי



Yom Kippur Schedule



Friday, September 17 - Erev Yom Kippur

Slichos 6:35am

Shacharis 6:50am

Mincha 3:30pm

Fast Begins 7:06pm

(stop eating/drinking several minutes before this)

Light 6:49pm

Tefilah Zakah 6:30pm

Kol Nidre 6:50pm

Shabbos, September 18 - Yom Kippur

Shacharis 8:00am

Yizkor 11:00am

Mincha 4:45pm

Maariv 7:55pm

Fast Ends 7:55pm

To subscribe to the YIML email list, visit
<http://mail.chaseplanet.us/mailman/listinfo/yiml>

Weekday Davening Times

Sunday, September 19

Shacharis 8:00am

Mincha 6:45pm

Monday, September 20

Shacharis 6:40am

Mincha 6:45pm

Tuesday, September 21

Shacharis 6:50am

Mincha 6:45pm

Succos Schedule

Wednesday, September 22 - Erev Succos

Shacharis 6:50

Eruv Tavshilin

Light 6:40pm

Mincha 6:45pm

Thursday, September 23 - Succos 1

Shacharis 8:45am

Mincha 6:45pm

Maariv and Candle Lighting 7:42pm

Friday, September 24 - Succos 2

Shacharis 8:45am

Candle Lighting 6:37pm

Mincha 6:45pm

Shabbos, September 25 - Shabbos Chol haMoed

Shacharis 8:45am

Mincha 6:35pm

Maariv 7:38pm

Thought of the Week, continued.

Hashem in thought alone. A person must verbalize this thought in order to concretize it. Conversely, if a person makes any statement which expresses a denial of Hashem's reality, even if he does not believe that which he is saying, it impacts negatively upon him and can imbed within him a doubt as to Hashem's existence. Consequently, as soon as Rabbi Amnon uttered the words implying that he would consider becoming an apostate, he sensed the impact that it had upon his own belief, and realized that he had erred.

Adapted from "Saying Is Believing" by Rabbi Zweig
<http://www.torah.org/learning/rabbizweig/5771/yomkippur.html>

We regret to inform you of the passing of Mrs. Dorothy Laytin z"l, beloved mother of our member, Sid Laytin. May the Mourners be comforted among the aveilei Tzion veYerushalayim.

Rabbi Mordche Young is selling Arba Minim at YIML (in the front suite upstairs) on Motzai Yom Kippur, starting at around 9:30pm.

The Chevra Mishnayos is learning Seder Taharos. See shul bulletin board to sign up or email eisenber@pol.net with your name and the masechta (and chapters) you intend to learn.

A Father-Son Shiur with Rabbi Steinberg (recommended age of 5th grade and up) studying Sefer Melachim Aleph (Kings I) Shiur will meet Monday nights at 8pm, starting Oct 4th. E-mail Rabbi Steinberg to join.

The Halacha Shiur with Rabbi Steinberg will be learning "classic" Yoreh Deah (Hilchos Basar v'Chalav, Taaruvos, etc.) The shiur will meet Tuesday nights at 8:30pm, resuming weekly Oct 5th. Visit the yiml website for instructions to join the online group for mareh mekomos and other updates and to be part of the massa umattan between shiurim.