

Interpreting the Map of Our Lives

Study Texts

High Holy Days 5769

Rabbi Scott Meltzer

Ohr Shalom Synagogue

I. Where Are We?

Or

Locating Myself on the Map

Erev Rosh HaShanah

Monday, September 29, 2008

II. How Did We Get Here?

Or

Telling My Story

First Morning of Rosh HaShanah

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

III. Where Are We Going?

Or

Planning by Committee

Second Morning of Rosh HaShanah

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

IV. How Do I Create A New Map?

Or

Asking for Directions

Kol Nidre

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

V. Returning Home

Or

Arriving at our Destination

Morning of Yom Kippur

Thursday, October 9, 2008

I. Where Are We?
Or
Locating Myself on the Map

Erev Rosh HaShanah
Monday, September 29, 2008

- I. **Genesis 6:13 & 6:17 (God before the flood), 9:9 (God making a covenant with Noah after the flood), 22:1 (Abraham to God before being told to sacrifice Isaac), 22:7 (Abraham to Isaac on the way the mountain), 22:11 (Abraham to angel), 27:1 (Esau to Isaac), 27:18 (Isaac to a disguised Jacob), 31:11 (Jacob to angel in a dream), 37:13 (Joseph to Israel his father), 41:17 (Pharaoh describing his dream to Joseph), 46:2 (God to Jacob in a dream), 48:4 (Jacob telling Joseph what God had promised to him), 168 other times in the Hebrew Bible, and the Cantor before the *Musaf Amidah*.**

Here am I.

הנני

- II. **Gordon Livingston, *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart: Thirty True Things You Need to Know Now*, Marlowe & Co., New York, 2004, pp. 1-2.**

Once, a long time ago, I was a young lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne Division, trying to orient myself on a field problem at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As I stood studying a map, my platoon sergeant, a veteran of many junior officers, approached. "You figure out where we are, lieutenant?" he asked. "Well, the map says there should be a hill over there, but I don't see it," I replied. "Sir," he said, "if the map don't agree with the ground, then the map is wrong."

III. **Babylonian Talmud, *Chagigah 14b***

תנו רבנן: ארבעה נכנסו בפרדס, ואלו הן: בן עזאי, ובן זומא, אחר, ורבי עקיבא. אמר להם רבי עקיבא: כשאתם מגיעין אצל אבני שיש טהור אל תאמרו מים מים משום שנאמר (תהלים ק"א) דובר שקרים לא יכון לנגד עיני. בן עזאי הציץ ומת, עליו הכתוב אומר (תהלים קט"ז) יקר בעיני ה' המותה לחסידיו. בן זומא הציץ ונפגע, ועליו הכתוב אומר (משלי כ"ה) דבש מצאת אכל דרך פן תשבענו והקאתו. אחר קיצץ בנטיעות. רבי עקיבא יצא בשלום.

Our Rabbis taught: Four men entered the Paradise, namely, Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma, Acher (Elishah ben Abuyah), and Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Akiba said to them: When you arrive at the stones of pure marble, say not, water, water! For it is said: "The one who speaks falsehood shall not be established before My eyes" (Ps. 101:7). Ben Azzai cast a look and died. Of him Scripture says: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of God's faithful ones" (Ps. 116:15). Ben Zoma looked and became demented. Of him Scripture says: "If you find honey, eat only what you need, lest, you become satiated, you throw it up" (Prov. 25:16). Acher mutilated the shoots. Rabbi Akiba departed unhurt.

IV. Michael Chabon, *Maps and Legends*, McSweeney's Books, 2008, pp. 221-222.

I'd had a similar experience with *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*. To my surprise, I discovered that there were readers who came away from the novel believing that Sam Clay and Joe Kavalier had really existed, that they had really created a character known as the Escapist back in the '40s, and that somewhere out there you would be able to find and purchase old Escapist comic books and perhaps even original artwork drawn by Joe Kavalier. These people wrote me letters and emails asking me how they could obtain such things. I confess that I tended to view people like this as having a certain amount of the sucker in them. I was not looking for suckers. God knows I was not trying to sucker anybody. But the suckers are out there, and they will get suckered whether you want them to or not.

On the signing line after the first public reading I did from my novel *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, which presents among other deceptions an entirely fictitious, entirely Jewish modern-day city of Sitka, Alaska, an apparently intelligent and literate woman approached me to say that she had been to Sitka on a cruise and was astonished to learn now that she had somehow missed seeing all of those Jews up there. She didn't remember any of the tall buildings either. She was not challenging me in my facts, and she was not joking. She was simply wonderstruck by her own failure to have seen all of that from the deck of her cruise ship. Listening to me read the first chapter of my novel—fully advertised as such by me in my opening remarks—was enough to make her doubt her own recollections, to accept my sophisticated lie over the crude but veracious fragments of her own memory.

I felt that Trickster flush of surprise, triumph, satisfaction: *Sucker!* It made me giddy; it also made me feel a little ill. I didn't know how to disabuse her, or whether I ought to do so at all. On the one hand, I had indeed been trying, at the most fundamental level, to deceive her, along with every reader the novel would ever find, into the most passionate and foolish belief. But at the same time I was also trying, always, with no greater hope or ambition, to tell her the truth, a truth: to convey my understanding of, my own bit of information on, the nature of Jews and Alaska and Life. It is along the knife-narrow borderland between those two kingdoms, between the Empire of Lies and the Republic of Truth, more than along any other frontier on the map of existence, that Trickster makes his wandering way, and either comes to grief or finds his supper, his treasure, his fate.

"Maybe next time you're there," I told the lady before I signed my name across the title page of another pack of lies. "Check it out."

II. How Did We Get Here?

Or

Telling My Story

First Morning of Rosh HaShanah

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

V. Passover Haggadah

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.

VI. Genesis 1:1-3 (JPS Translation)

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאֶךָ: ב וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: ג וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאֵר וְנִבְרָכֻךָ בְּךָ כֹּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה:

¹The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse him that curses you; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you."

VII. Genesis 11:31-32 (JPS Translation)

לא וַיִּקַּח תֵּרַח אֶת-אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בְּנֵי-הָרֶן בְּנֵי-בְנוֹ וְאֶת שָׂרִי כַלְתּוֹ אִשְׁתֵּי אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וַיֵּצְאוּ אֹתָם מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְבֹאוּ עַד-חָרָן וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: לֵב וַיְהִי וּמִלִּתְרַח חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וּמֵאֵתַים שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת תֵּרַח בְּחָרָן:

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans for the land of Canaan; but when they had come as far as Haran, they settled there. ³²The days of Terah came to 205 years; and Terah died in Haran.

VIII. Joshua 24:1-8, 11, 25-26

א וַיֵּאסֹף יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂכֵמָה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְרָאשֵׁי וּלְשֹׁפְטָיו וּלְשֹׁטְרָיו וַיִּתְנַצְּבוּ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶבֶר הַנָּהָר יָשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם תָּרַח אָבִי אֲבִרְהָם וְאָבִי נַחֹר וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ג וְאֶקַּח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־אֲבִרְהָם מֵעֶבֶר הַנָּהָר וְאוֹלָךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וְנָאֲרָב [וְנָאֲרָבָה] אֶת־זֶרְעוֹ וְנָאֲתָן לוֹ אֶת־לְצַחֵק: ד וְנָאֲתָן לִיצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְנָאֲתָן לַעֲשׂוֹ אֶת־הַר שַׁעִיר לְרֵשֶׁת אוֹתוֹ וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם: ה וְנָאֲשַׁלַּח אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְנָאֲתָן אֶת־הָרֶן וְנָאֲגַף אֶת־מִצְרָיִם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַחַר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם: ו וְנָאוּצִיא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם וְתָבֹאוּ הַיָּמָה וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרָיִם אֲחֵרֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּרֶכֶב וּבַפָּרָשִׁים יַם־סוּף: ז וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּשָׁם מֵאֶפֶל בְּיַנִּיכֶם א וּבֵין הַמִּצְרָיִם וַיָּבֵא עָלָיו אֶת־הַיָּם וַיִּכְסְהוּ וְתָרְאִינָה עֵינֵיכֶם אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי בְּמִצְרָיִם וְתִשְׁבוּ בְּמִדְבַר יָמִים רַבִּים: ח וְנָאֲבֵאָה [וְנָאֲבִיא] אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ הָאֲמֹרִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן . . . יָא וְתַעֲבְרוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וְתָבֹאוּ אֶל־יְרִיחוֹ . . .

1Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned Israel's elders and commanders, magistrates and officers; and they presented themselves before God. 2Then Joshua said to all the people, "Thus said the LORD, the God of Israel: In olden times, your forefathers— Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and worshiped other gods. 3But I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan and multiplied his offspring. I gave him Isaac, 4and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir as his possession, while Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with [the wonders] that I wrought in their midst, after which I freed you—6I freed your fathers—from Egypt, and you came to the Sea. But the Egyptians pursued your fathers to the Sea of Reeds with chariots and horsemen. 7They cried out to the LORD, and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians; then He brought the Sea upon them, and it covered them. Your own eyes saw what I did to the Egyptians. After you had lived a long time in the wilderness, 8I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan. . . . 11Then you crossed the Jordan and you came to Jericho.

כה וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִית לְעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּשָׁם לוֹ חֹק וּמִשְׁפָּט בְּשֵׁכֶם: כו וַיִּכְתֹּב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרַת אֱלֹהִים וַיִּקַּח אֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וַיִּקְיֶמָה שָׁם תַּחַת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה:

25On that day at Shechem, Joshua made a covenant for the people and he made a fixed rule for them. 26Joshua recorded [literally: wrote] all this in a book of divine instruction [literally: book of God's Torah]. He took a great stone and set it up at the foot of the oak in the sacred precinct of the LORD.

III. Where Are We Going?

Or

Planning by Committee

Second Morning of Rosh HaShanah

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

IX. Genesis 22:1-4

א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהֶאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: ב וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אַרְצוֹ הַמִּזְרֵיחַ וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהִים: ג וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתוֹ וְאֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֲצֵי עֹלָה וַיִּקַּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: ד בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרְחֹק:

1Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." 2And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." 3So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. 4On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar.

X. Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken", *Mountain Interval*, 1920.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet, knowing how way leads onto way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence
Two roads diverged in a wood
And I took the one less traveled by
And that has made all the difference.

XI. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

ולתגיד גדולתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, שאדם טובע כמה מטבעות בחותם אחד וכולן דומין זה לזה, ומלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא טבע כל אדם בחותמו של אדם הראשון ואין אחד מהן דומה לחברו. לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר, בשבילי נברא העולם.

[Why did God create all of humanity from a single ancestor?] In order to proclaim the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be God. For if a human creates many coins from a single mold, they all resemble one another, but the Supreme Ruler of all Rulers, the Holy One, Blessed be God, stamps each human in the mold of the first human, and no two look alike. Therefore each and every person is obligated to say: for my sake was the world created.

XII. Reb Zusya of Anipol, 18th century Chassid

When I get to the Heavenly Court they will not fault me for not being Moses. They will not ask me 'Why weren't you more like Moses?' They will ask me, 'Why weren't you more like Zusya?'

XIII. Dr. Suess, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, Random House, New York, 1990.

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose. . .

So . . .
be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,
you're off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So . . . *get on your way!*

IV. How Do I Create A New Map?

Or

Asking for Directions

Kol Nidre

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

XIV. Isaiah 65:1

א נְדַרְשֵׁתִי לְלוֹא שְׁאֵלוּ נִמְצָאתִי לְלוֹא בִקְשֵׁנִי אֲמַרְתִּי הֲנִי הֲנִי אֶלְגֹּוֹי לֹא־קָרָא בְשִׁמִּי :

1I responded to those who did not ask, I was at hand to those who did not seek Me; I said, "Here I am, here I am," To a nation that did not invoke My name.

XV. Ezekiel 18:23

כַּג הֲחִפְצָּךְ אֲחִפְצָּךְ מוֹת כְּשֶׁע נָאִם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הֲלוֹא בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדְרָכָיו וְחָיָה :

23Is it my desire that a wicked person shall die?—says the Lord GOD. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live.

XVI. Babylonian Talmud, Chagigah 15a

תנו רבנן : מעשה באחר שהיה רוכב על הסוס בשבת, והיה רבי מאיר מהלך אחריו ללמוד תורה מפיו. אמר לו : מאיר, חזור לאחריך, שכבר שיערתי בעקבי סוסי עד כאן תחום שבת.

Our Rabbis taught: Once Aher was riding on a horse on the Sabbath, and R. Meir was walking behind him to learn Torah at his mouth. Said [Aher] to him: Meir, turn back, for I have already measured by the paces of my horse that thus far extends the Sabbath limit.

XVII. Billy Crystal, *700 Sundays*, Warner Books, 2005, pp.177-178.

About a year before my mom passed away, it was a Saturday night in Los Angeles, very late, around 12:45 on a Saturday night, which actually makes it a Sunday. The phone rings and I panic, because when you're a Jew and the phone rings late at night, it means somebody's dead. Or worse, they want money. But no. It's Mom calling from the house.

"Mom, are you okay?"

'Yeah. I'm fine, dear."

"But Mom, it's three-thirty in the morning."

"I know. I just wanted to hear your voice, Bill. That's all. I woke up your brothers too, but I wanted to hear your voice."

"But you're okay?"

"Yeah. I just—I couldn't sleep. I've been having trouble sleeping, and I just couldn't sleep."

"Oh, really ..." I softly said, nodding my head. Her honesty was disarming.

I'm an insomniac myself. I mean, I've been up since 1948. I wanted to find out why she couldn't sleep because somehow it might help me. But, really, I just wanted the conversation to keep going on, because these kinds of conversations with your parents are best when they're not just your parents, but they feel like they're your friends.

"Mom, why can't you sleep?" There was a pause, and then . . .

"Oh, I'm listening for you boys."

I knew exactly what she meant. The cry in the middle of the night, "Mommy, I have a fever." The nightmares, "Mommy, there are pirates in the room!" Then as they get older, the sound of their cars pulling up in the driveway, the jingle of their keys in the front door lock, just so that you know that they're home safe. She was eighty-five years old now, alone in that house, her sons scattered across the country, but she was listening for us.

We sold the house. We had to. Without her in it, it really didn't make much sense to keep it. Somebody else owns it now, but it doesn't belong to them . . . because I can close my eyes and go there anytime I want.

V. Returning Home
Or
Arriving at our Destination

Morning of Yom Kippur
Thursday, October 9, 2008

XVIII. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 32a

יהי דומה בעיניו כמו שהעלוהו לגרדום לידון שכל העולה לגרדום לידון, אם יש לו פרקליטין גדולים ניצול, ואם לאו אינו ניצול. ואלו הן פרקליטין של אדם תשובה ומעשים טובים. ואפילו תשע מאות ותשעים ותשעה מלמדים עליו חובה, ואחד מלמד עליו זכות ניצול, שנאמר (איוב לג) אם יש עליו מלאך מליץ אחד מני אלף להגיד לאדם ישרו ויחננו ויאמר פדעהו מרדת שחת וגו'.

For whoever ascends the scaffold to be punished, if he has great advocates he is saved, but if not he is not saved. And these are man's advocates: repentance and good deeds. And even if nine hundred and ninety-nine argue for his guilt, while one argues in his favor, he is saved, for it is said, If there be with him an angel, an advocate, one among a thousand, To shew unto man what is right for him; Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, etc. (Job 33:23-24)

XIX. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, Tomer Devorah, Chapter 1, Attribute 7

אין הקב"ה מתנהג כמדת בשר ודם, שאם הכעיסו חברו כשהוא מתרצה עמו מתרצה מעט לא באהבה הקודמת; אבל אם חטא אדם ועשה תשובה, מעלתו יותר גדולה עם הקב"ה. והיינו (ברכות ל"ד ב) "במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים אין צדיקים גמורים יכולין לעמוד". והטעם כדפירשו בפרק "הבונה" (בספרינו כתוב כך במנחות כ"ט, ב) בענין ה', למה היא עשויה כאכסדרה, שכל הרוצה לצאת מעולמו יצא, פירוש העולם נברא בה', והקב"ה ברא העולם פתוח לצד הרע והחטא לרווחה, אין צד שאין חומר ויצר הרע ופגם, כמין אכסדרה, שאינה בעלת גדרים אלא פרצה גדולה פרוצה לצד הרע לצד מטה, כל מי שירצה לצאת מעולמו, כמה פתחין לו, לא יפנה לצד שלא ימצא בו צד חטא ועון ליכנס אל החיצונים. וגם היא פתוחה מלמעלה שאם ישוב יקבלהו. והקשו שם "ולהדרוהו בהא"י" "לא מסתייעא מלתא". רצו בזה, שהשב בתשובה לא יספיק לו שיהיה נגדר בעון כגדר הצדיקים, מפני שהצדיקים שלא חטאו, גדר מעט יספיק אליהם, אמנם החוטא שחטא ושב לא יספיק לו גדר מעט, אלא צריך להגדיר עצמו כמה גדרים קשים, מפני שאותו גדר המעט כבר נפרץ פעם אחת, אם יתקרב שם, בקל יפתחו יצרו, אלא צריך להתרחק הרחק גדול מאד, ולזה לא יכנס דרך פתח האכסדרה שהפרצה שם, אלא יתעלה ויכנס דרך פתח צר, ויעשה כמה צרות וסגופים לעצמו ויסתום הפרצות. ומטעם זה "במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים וכו'", מפני שלא נכנסו דרך פתח הצדיקים כדי שיהיו עם הצדיקים, אלא נצטערו ועלו דרך פתח העליון, וסגפו עצמן ונבדלו מן החטא יותר ויותר מן הצדיקים, לכך עלו ועמדו במדרגה ה', היכל ה' שבגן עדן, דהיינו גג הה"א, וצדיקים בפתח הה"א בכניסת האכסדרה. ולזה, כאשר האדם יעשה תשובה, דהיינו תשוב ה' אל מקומו, ויחזיר הקב"ה שכנינתו עליו, אינו שב כאהבה הראשונה בלבד, אלא יותר ויותר. והיינו "ישוב ירחמנו", שיוסיף רחמים לישראל ויתקנם ויקרבם יותר.

The Holy One, Blessed is He, does not behave as a human being behaves. When the latter has been provoked he cannot bring himself to love as formerly the one who offended him, even when he has been appeased. But in God's sight the repentant sinner has a higher status than the man who has never sinned. This is the meaning of the Rabbinic teaching that in the place where the penitent stands the perfectly righteous cannot stand. The reason for this has been expounded by the Rabbi's in the chapter

'He Who Builds,' where it is stated that the letter He is shaped like an exedra so that whomsoever wishes to go astray may do so. That is to say, the world was created by means of the letter He and the Holy One, Blessed is He, created the world wide open in the direction of sin and evil. As the exedra, the world is not fully enclosed but is broken open towards the direction of evil. Consequently, he who wishes to go astray need not turn in those directions where there is no sin and iniquity by which to enter in the province of the Outside Ones. But the He is open at the top left-hand corner so that if the sinner repents he can be received back there. Upon which the Talmud asks: 'And why should he not re-enter by the same way as he went out?' and the reply is give: 'This will have no effect,' meaning that the repentant sinner cannot be content to be fenced around from sinning as are the perfectly righteous. For a slight fence is sufficient to act as a barrier against sin for those who have not sinned. But such a barrier will not suffice for the penitent. He requires new and difficult fences. For the slight fence has been broken through and if he tries to draw near in that direction his evil inclination will find it easy to tempt him. He needs to be very far removed from sin. Consequently, he cannot enter at the opening of the exedra where it is breached. He must ascend to enter through the narrow opening, tormenting and mortifying himself until the breaches have been healed. This is why the righteous cannot stand in the place of the penitents. For the latter have not entered by the door of the righteous, but they have tormented themselves, ascending through the upper door. They have far deeper mortified and separated themselves from sin than have the righteous. They have therefore ascended until they stand in the spiritual degree of He - namely, the fifth palace of the Garden of Eden, which is the roof of the He, while the righteous have entered at the opening of the He at the entrance to the exedra.

Consequently, then man repents - and this means that he restores the He to its proper place - he does not return only to God's former love but that love is increased more and more. This is the meaning of: **He will again have compassion upon us:** that He will increase His mercies towards Israel and perfect them and draw them near to Him.

XX. Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a

דאמר רבי אבהו : מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין שם ׀ צדיקים אינן עומדין שם

Rabbi Abbahu said: The place occupied by repentant sinners cannot be attained even by the completely righteous.

XXI. Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Meaning of Repentance," 1936, published in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, p. 69.

The most unnoticed of all miracles is the miracle of repentance. It is not the same thing as rebirth; it is transformation, creation. In the dimension of time there is no going back. But the power of repentance causes time to be created backward and allows re-creation of the past to take place. Through the forgiving hand of God, harm and blemish which we have committed against the world and against ourselves will be extinguished, transformed into salvation.

God brings about this creation for the sake of humanity when a human being repents for the sake of God.

XXII. Joseph Soloveitchik, as taught in Pinchas Peli, *On Teshuvah*, Jason Aronson, Inc, New Jersey, 1996, pp. 253-265, 317-320.

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The Holy One, blessed be He, appears then, in the words of the liturgy of the Day of Atonement, as "He [who] is patient and condones those who go astray." The quality of strict justice cannot fathom this and asks in wonder: How is it possible to obliterate what has occurred? Logic, too, is outraged at the possibility of uprooting part of man's consciousness, excising part of man's memory. Both Nietzsche and Kant claimed that this was impossible, but Judaism says: Yes, it can be done. Abraham was the first to demonstrate that it was indeed possible, that man can make a clean break and start anew!

Repentance of this sort leaves man only a limited sense of feeling of "return." To where shall he return? He returns to his starting point, to where he stood prior to embarking upon the road of sin, and everything that has occurred in the meantime disappears, as if it had never been. The Holy One, blessed be He, then recompenses him for this loss by pardoning his sin and erasing it from the books.

This is the first way of repentance, but there is another way—not by annihilating evil but by rectifying and elevating it. This repentance does not entail making a clean break with the past or obliterating memories. It allows man, at one and the same time, to continue to identify with the past and still to return to God in repentance.

"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them" (Deuteronomy 20:19). How much more so should one not destroy, frivolously, ten years or tens of years of one's life! What, then, shall the penitent do with all those years of sin? He does not want to identify with them, and yet he cannot blot them out. What shall he do?

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When the goal is annihilation of evil, there cannot be any compromises. Evil must be utterly destroyed and cast into the depths of the sea. But there also is another way of dealing with evil, and that is by rectifying it and uplifting it. This way of repentance does not transform the penitent into "another." Here, there is no clean break between "this person" of yesterday and the "he" of today. It is not necessary to blot out and erase the past. The future can be built upon the foundations of the past. How so? By elevating and exalting evil. How does one exalt evil to such an extent that it ceases to be evil? How does the "despised and abhorred" of yesterday become the "beloved and desired" of today, without erasing and annihilating yesterday?

Repentance of this sort does not require man to return to the starting-point where he was originally, but rather infuses him with a burning desire to come as near as he can to the Creator of the universe and attain spiritual heights undreamed of before he sinned. Man then becomes infused with strength and power he did not have previously.

From whence does it come?

The Dynamics of Sin

The intensity of sin and the sense of guilt and shame that overwhelms man in its wake are such strong drives that they impel the penitent upward and outward in the direction of the Creator of the universe. The years of sin are transformed into powerful impulsive forces which propel the sinner toward God.

Sin is not to be forgotten, blotted out or cast into the depths of the sea. On the contrary, sin has to be remembered. It is the memory of sin that releases the power within the inner

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depths of the soul of the penitent to do greater things than ever before. The energy of sin can be used to bring one to new heights.

The Talmudic sage, Resh Lakish, was renowned as a man who sinned grievously and repented. According to Rabbenu Tarn (Tosafot, Baba Metzia 84a), Resh Lakish was an accomplished scholar before he became a thief. After he fell to thievery, Rabbi Johanan succeeded in convincing him to repent of his ways, and thereafter Resh Lakish became "even greater" than he had been before. How did this happen? Certainly, while he was out thieving and robbing, he wasn't engaged in the study of Torah! What, then, made him greater after he sinned than he had been before? Sin itself!

The penitent who does not wipe out the past nor tear the pages of sin from his memory, but rather makes a point to use the memory of his sins to enhance his longings for holiness that are bursting forth from inside of him—such a person achieves the quality of repentance which elevates evil to a state of goodness. With regard to such a penitent, the Holy One, blessed be He, does not "overlook transgression" but "bears sin and transgression." It is as if He lifts up and elevates sin and transgression to unimaginable heights.

"Now these are the last words of David, the saying of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1). The plain meaning of the phrase "raised on high" is that King David was endowed with greatness by God, but our Sages interpreted the phrase homiletically to mean that "he (King David) raised on high the yoke of repentance" (T.B., Mo'ed Katan 16b). David was the penitent *par excellence* who was raised on high so as to serve as an example to all of Israel. What was it that made David so great that, in Rashi's phrase (*ad loc.*), "Israel sings in the Temple only his

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songs and his melodies"? The answer is: the fact that he sinned and repented, that he took sin and out of it constructed the yoke of repentance.

In light of this, Resh Lakish's comments which were cited earlier can now be understood: "Great is repentance that causes premeditated sins to be accounted as errors." Resh Lakish was here referring to repentance by means of which sin is annihilated. Such repentance erases sin, but it has no creative power and does not germinate or give life to anything new. Premeditated sins are accounted as errors, as though they never took place at all. They are wiped away. But in his second comment Resh Lakish said that "repentance is so great that premeditated sins are accounted as though they were merits," and here he was referring to repentance by means of which sin is elevated and exalted. This motivates man to fulfill the precepts with a vigor and a zest lacking before he sinned and causes him to study and learn Torah in a different manner. What was it that made Resh Lakish worthy of being the closest friend of Rabbi Johanan, the most esteemed Sage of

his day? The fact that he had repented and that, by means of repentance, he had elevated and exalted the evil used for thievery to the goodness that lay in the study of Torah.

Repentance in which evil is elevated is brought about by love, and, because of it, premeditated sins are considered as merits, while repentance in which evil is blotted out is instigated by fear, and, because of it, premeditated sins are accounted as errors. In repentance of love, love rises with the flames of repentance and burns brightly in the fires fanned by sin; the bonds of love pull man up to great and exalted heights. It is concerning repentance of this sort, that the Sages said: "Great is repentance that touches the Throne of Glory" (T.B., Yoma 86a).

You may ask: How is it possible for one who has repented to get nearer and ascend higher than he was before he sinned?

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How is it possible for sins to act as a dynamic force leading to holiness? Is it not written: "Who can purify the unclean? No one!" (Job 14:4)? God alone knows the answer to this mystery. The Master of the Universe, the Creator of all, He is the one who made it possible to purify the unclean, and perhaps the idea of uplifting evil belongs in the same category.

The following phenomenon may also explain the dynamics of sin.

There seems to be a tragic flaw inherent in the nature of man from which no one can escape. The people and things that we love and cherish most are not fully appreciated as long as they are alive and present with us. We realize what they meant to us only after they are gone and their image has become faded and unreal. They seem to twinkle from afar as the stars in the night; we admire them but cannot touch them.

How many near and dear ones did we have whom we did not succeed in appreciating fully, as long as they were with us: mother, father, teacher, wife or husband? I am not speaking of those people who failed to properly observe the precept of honoring their father and mother or of those who neglected to show due respect to their teachers or love to their marital partner. I am speaking, specifically, of those who showed the utmost honor to their parents and who esteemed their teachers and were dedicated to their husband or wife. Even these people must suffer the burden of feelings of guilt for not having done what they could while their loved ones were still alive. Whoever fails to be tormented by such remorse does not know the real meaning of grief for a dearly loved one who is gone forever.

The practices relating to *shiva* (the initial seven-day period of mourning) and *shloshim* (the first thirty days after death) and the year of mourning are all practices of mourning which the sages have instituted in accordance with the nature of man. But the essence of mourning consists not only of grief for one

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who has gone but also in the pain of "would that I could"—if I only could, I would make amends now for what I didn't do when I could have acted differently, but, alas, it is no longer possible to undo the damage.

The following story related in the Talmud illustrates this most poignantly: "When Rav died, his disciples walked after him (in the burial procession). When they returned, they said: Let's go and eat bread alongside the Dank River. After they had eaten they asked themselves whether the requirement of *zimmun*, reciting a joint grace after meals, was applicable only if they had decided to

say the blessing over the bread together (before the meal) or whether it was also applicable when they had casually sat down and said, let us eat together. They were at a loss for an answer. Thereupon Rav Ada bar Ahava got up and tore at his garment where it had been rent before and said: 'Rav's soul has left him and we haven't even learned [the laws] of grace after meals!' " (T.B., Berakhot 42b).

Rav Ada bar Ahava rent his garment the first time in grief over the death of Rav, the Master of all of Israel. Everything that Rav Ada knew he had learned from Rav, his great master. No one had meant more to him than his teacher, Rav. Yet he suddenly realized that he had hardly known his master. This happened when he was confronted with a facile question of law and he did not know what had to be done. Only at that moment did he become aware of what he had lost, and it was then that he tore his garment a second time, out of grief at not having really known his master as he should have, for he had been even greater than anyone realized. "Rav's soul has departed from him and we haven't even learned [the basic laws of] grace after meals!" We have not even learned properly something as routine as grace after meals. It was then that Rav Ada and his colleagues realized that their master was gone, whereupon they tore their garments a second time. At that moment, Rav Ada surely would have given his life to be able

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to spend five more minutes with his illustrious teacher and discuss the problem about grace after meals which he had not managed to study sufficiently before. But it was now too late. He found himself before a stone wall. An unbridgeable chasm separated him from his master and there was no way he could possibly span it.

It was then that he rent his garment for a second time-in grief for his beloved master and for the loss he felt.

The longing for one who has died and is gone forever is worse than death. The soul is overcome and shattered by fierce longing.

Just before Rosh Hashana, I imagined that my father, of blessed memory, was standing beside me. He was the one and only *rebbe*, master and teacher, that I ever had. I put my life down before him and said: "My father, my teacher, I have had so many new insights concerning the laws of the Day of Atonement . . . certainly there are amongst them some which would have pleased you, and also some which you would have rejected. . . ." That was how I imagined myself speaking to my father, knowing that I would receive no response. Oh, what would I have given to be able to discuss Torah with him, if only for five minutes! But I knew that my beloved father, who had once been so close to me, was now far away, and my heart burst with the desire to talk to him for even five minutes, which had not seemed so valuable while he was still alive.

The same is true regarding my mother and my wife. Several days ago I once again sat down to prepare my annual discourse on the subject of repentance. I always used to discuss it with my wife, and she would help me to define and crystallize my thoughts. This year, too, I prepared the discourse, while consulting her: "Could you please advise me? Should I expand upon this idea or cut down on that idea? Should I emphasize this point or that one?"

I asked, but heard no reply. Perhaps there was a whis-

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pered response to my question, but it was swallowed up by the wind whistling through the trees and did not reach me.

The Intensity of Longing

Every person, during his lifetime, is confronted by the tragedy of longing for one who was near just a short while ago and now is irrevocably gone. These longings are accompanied by severe pangs of guilt which plague one relentlessly and may even drive one mad.

How intense is the desire to make contact with a loved one who has gone afar! But how unrealistic it is, how impossible it is to achieve, for these souls which we so long for are far removed from us, shrouded under the comforting wings of the *Shekhinah*.

The penitent one who does *teshuvah* undergoes a similar experience. When a Jew sins, he banishes the Holy One, blessed be He, from his presence.

At first man may not sense what has happened, he may not realize what has actually occurred, just as one fails to grasp the horrible tragedy of the death of someone dear. Only after the initial excitement, after the *shiva* (seven day period of mourning) or the *shloshim* (first thirty days after death) have passed, does one feel the loss, does one sense that one's home has been destroyed and the most intimately precious part in one's life is no more.

This happens to anyone who has lost someone dear to him. The same thing applies in the spiritual realm when God has departed from man in the wake of his sins. At times the loss may be felt right after the *shiva*, but occasionally thirty or forty years pass before one finally senses the emptiness and the void.

Mourning by the sinner over his separation from the Holy One, blessed be He, is like mourning over the death of

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a beloved one. It may come late, but come it must. Nothing can hold it back when it does. Then comes the fear and loneliness, the estrangement and alienation. The emptiness of life becomes devastating and a deep sadness clutches at the soul.

Only the intimacy with God that man attains while standing in prayer sustains joy in life, gives man a ray of hope. Without it, "the earth is given into the hand of the wicked" (Job 9:23). No matter how old he is and what stage he has reached in life, a Jew begins to long again for the Master of the universe, in the same way as Rav Ada bar Ahava longed for his master and I long for my wife. But while our longings are a fantasy, since one who has died will never return, longing for the Master of the universe is realistic, and man is drawn to Him and rushes toward Him with all his strength. He runs faster than he used to before he strayed afar. The intensity of the longing that bursts forth after having been pent up for so long impels him forward. For example, were I actually to see my father, would I not run after him as fast as light itself?

So, too, the sinner who has repented runs after the Creator, with all his might and strength.

This impulsion of longing raises the individual who has repented to a level above that of the thoroughly righteous man. He has not forgotten his sin-he must not forget it. Sin is the

generating force, the springboard which pushes him higher and higher. For such a person, repentance does not mean a clean break with the past, but rather continuity; for him the Holy One, blessed be He, does not "overlook sin" but "bears sin and iniquity."

There is another reason why a repentant sinner is greater than a truly righteous man. The Kabbalists (and the psychologists agree with them) say that two forces repose in the soul of

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man, constructive forces and destructive forces. Love is a constructive force. Standing opposed to it, jealousy and hatred are destructive forces. The Tor ah enjoins us to nurture and develop the constructive spiritual forces within us: "Love thy neighbor as thyself; "Despise not ... Desire not"; "May the Lord show you mercy"; etc. The positive forces are by and large static and passive in nature, while the negative forces are dynamic and aggressive.

This should be obvious to everybody. Compare, for example, love and hate. A lover is much more passive and much slower to react than one who hates. What won't a person who hates do in order to hurt the object of his passion! Neither rain nor sleet nor snow will deter him from an opportunity to do harm to his enemy, but a friend who is called to a meeting on behalf of someone he loves will often find an excuse to stay at home and will claim that it is either too hot or too cold or that he can't leave his wife alone at home. That is the nature of love which is far less aggressive than hate. Hate is stronger than love, jealousy is more powerful than endearment. Hate is more emotional and more volatile than love. The destructive forces are stronger than the constructive forces.

A thoroughly righteous man is not given to feelings of hatred or jealousy; he is distinguished by natural feelings of love and mercy and kindness. These feelings often lack force and spirit. But a man who has sinned and has repented may be able—if he proves worthy—to utilize the dynamism of the forces of evil which had enveloped him before and elevate them, and to make them operate on behalf of the forces of good.

The very same hunger and zest which drove him to do evil and sin can be utilized to do good and observe the precepts.

The very same eagerness and dedication with which he invested his labors in order to make money illicitly, he can

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now invest in the labor of charity and in doing deeds of loving-kindness.

By sinning, he discovered new spiritual forces within his soul, a reservoir of energy, of stubbornness and possessiveness whose existence he had not been aware of before he sinned. Now he has the capacity to sanctify these forces and to direct them upward. The aggression which he has discovered in himself will not allow him to be satisfied with the standards by which he used to measure his good deeds before he sinned; it will rather push him nearer and closer to the Throne of Glory.

When one reaches the exalted level of elevating evil, one can no longer say, "and this is my acquittal"; one can no longer say, "I have brought my sacrifice, I have made a break with the past and now I am a different person." No, I am not a different person, I am not starting anew; I am continuing onward, I am sanctifying evil and raising it to new heights.

This, indeed, was the power of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, and it was this that gave him the strength not only to pray but also to command: "Oh, acquit us!" He did not say, "And this is my acquittal," and begin things anew. Rather, he cited Scripture itself to support his position: "As it is written in the Torah of Moses Thy servant ... 'Before the Lord, be you cleansed!' " We have the capacity, on this day, to cleanse ourselves and uplift ourselves to great heights, to the Throne of Glory itself. Is there anyone who will dare to bar our way?

"The Day of Atonement is the time of repentance for everyone, for the individual as well as for the multitude; it is the goal of the penitential season, appointed unto Israel for pardon and forgiveness" (Laws of Repentance, Chapter 2, Section 7). The repentance of the Day of Atonement is the repentance of uplifting and exalting sin. "And in His temple everything saith, Glory" (Psalm 29:9), said the Psalmist. "This is the incense of the Day of Atonement" was how our Sages

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homiletically interpreted this verse. And the verse immediately preceding it states: "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve and strippeth the forest bare." On the Day of Atonement, the Holy One, blessed be He, demands of man that he strip the forest bare, that he take his life in his hand and enter the jungle of his soul where the animal that is in man hides out. God does not ask man to cut down the trees or to uproot the entire jungle. The world needs jungles just as it needs irrigated fields and beds of flowers. Jungles contain much that is vital and essential; in the depths of the wild a healthy aggressiveness prevails, but woe to the forest through which the voice of the Lord does not penetrate, the voice which makes the hinds calve and strips the forests bare. Our desire is not to destroy the trees, and we do not aim to burn down the jungles but to turn them to the voice of God! And after that has been achieved: "And in His temple everything saith, Glory—This is the incense of the Day of Atonement." What is incense? A mixture of galbanum and odoriferous spices. Why is it necessary to adulterate the odoriferous spices with foul-smelling galbanum? So as to demonstrate that it is possible to take something evil and mix it with good spices and, as a result, not only does the galbanum not detract from the sweet smell of the incense, but this mixture of good and bad actually enhances and augments its fragrance. On the Day of Atonement, incense is burned in the innermost sanctum of the Temple, and on that very day evil ascends to the Holy of Holies—it is not erased by Him who "overlooks sin" but is sanctified and purified by the elevation of sin.

On the Day of Atonement we are not bidden to tear out pages from the Book of Life or from the history of man. Man is not required to cover-up and conceal the bad years, the years of sin; rather he has the capacity to sanctify and purify them. Do we not pray to God: "Pardon our iniquities on this Day of Atonement; blot out and remove our transgressions and

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sins from Thy sight, as it is said: 'It is I who blot out your transgressions, for My sake; I will remember your sins no more' "? We thus begin with a prayer for annihilating evil, for blotting out iniquities and remembering them no more. But further on, a second idea is expressed in this very same prayer, the idea that repentance in which sin is annihilated is not enough: "And it is said: 'For the virtue of this very day shall acquit you of sin, to cleanse you, before God: be you cleansed' "—that is, uplifting and exalting sin. By means of repentance, one can rise and at the same time raise evil to such heights that it may even, together with the incense, enter into the Holy of Holies.

This, then, was the prayer, the command of the High Priest: "Before God, be you cleansed!" It was as if he had declared: Be not satisfied with "He who overlooks sin." Cast your eyes upward towards "He who bears sin and iniquity." It is true that the goal of the sacrificial ritual is to achieve acquittal, to blot out evil and obliterate it. Nevertheless, the goal of the whole service of the Day of Atonement is purification, which is why the High Priest does not say meekly, "And this is my acquittal" as does the individual in making confession upon his sacrifice. Instead the High Priest demands, loudly and clearly: "Oh, grant us acquittal!"

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Returning from the Exile of Sin

The analogy we previously drew between exile, destruction and the ingathering of the exiles on the one hand and sin and repentance on the other is pertinent to the present issue as well. We have shown that there are two types of repentance: the first by conquest and the second which involves the *Shekhinah*, just as there are two ways of obtaining sanctification when going to dwell in the Land of Israel—that obtained through conquest, as when Joshua conquered and consecrated one area after another, and the sanctification brought about by Ezra, when the Temple was built at the center while the rest of Israel was still under alien rule and its enemies still harassed it. The same applies to penitent people: there are those who sanctify themselves through acts of conquest and there are others who attain sanctity by inspiration received from the *Shekhinah*.

"Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee" (Deuteronomy 30:3). At first glance, it seems questionable why the Torah should have had to repeat "and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee"—for it has already stated: "will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee." It appears that there are two separate promises here: one, "that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee," and, two, "and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." The

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first promise means that quite suddenly God will act to redeem the entire people of Israel or an individual Jew in the act of doing penance. Sometimes the Almighty aids the penitent and causes a sudden revolution to take place in his way of thinking, transforming his whole worldview, affecting the total essence of his being. For many years his personality had been schizophrenic and fragmented; he had been pulled along by dark impulses and instincts; all his life he had been an outsider everywhere he went; he had been driven by dark spirits; his own soul was in a state of exile. And then, through a sudden ray of illumination, he discovered the focal point of his existence, and he was transformed into another person. A new light shone in the depths of his soul, new aspirations filled his being, he was released from the bonds that held him back, the fragments of his personality were collected and reunited to form an integrated person. The sparks which had gone far astray into infinite space assembled and burned as a single flame. The penitent regained control over his own self. All at once God freed him from his captivity: "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee."

We all know some cases of this type of penitent. Take, for example, what happened to the German-Jewish philosopher, Franz Rosenzweig. He was an outsider and an exile who almost reached the point of apostasy. During the First World War, he entered a small hassidic *bet midrash* (house of learning) on the Day of Atonement and left it a different man. Suddenly, the outsider and exile vanished; the apostate, too, disappeared, as did the assimilated and self-hating Jew. The great Jew, Franz Rosenzweig, had made his appearance.

That is the repentance meant by "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee." This is repentance which stems from the spontaneous eruption of the divine flame which possesses man's soul, "God's candle." It bursts outward in the same manner as Ezra's sanctification.

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This kind of sanctification is not the same as it was with Joshua's conquest; there is no need to assault Ai or Jericho, no need to conquer bastions, to topple walls or to conduct wars against the five kings. All Ezra had to do was to construct the Temple at the center, and from there the light radiated and invaded every corner of the Land from one end to the other. Similarly, there is a type of repentance which springs forth from the core of the personality, from the secret interior of the soul, which erupts from its inner depths and spreads over all of man's spiritual faculties and talents, throughout his body and limbs, overtaking his thoughts and feelings. The route in this type of repentance runs from the "Holy of Holies" to the circumference round about; even the alienated elements are, so to speak, resuscitated. My father, of blessed memory, told me in the name of Rabbi Haim that the verse from Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," refers to the type of sanctification invoked by Ezra, in contrast to that by Joshua. And this is also referred to in the verse, "Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee."

But this is not always the path of repentance. Sometimes it is analogous to the events of Joshua's conquest. At other times repentance does not come and suddenly overtake the whole man. Rather, man is called upon to advance step by step, to proceed from one struggle to another, to make one conquest after another. This is an arduous and protracted route—but in the end it leads to the establishment of the Holy Temple. It is in relation to this type of repentance that the To-rah repeats: "and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee." This is a slow and drawn-out ingathering of the soul's scattered fragments. But it is ultimately rewarded, and with God's help the soul attains the goal of redemption. And we are assured that "if any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heav-

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en, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee; and the Lord thy God will bring thee unto the Land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

There are those who attain repentance of the order of Ezra's sanctification and there are those who attain repentance through Joshua's way of sanctification. But concerning both, Tradition has bequeathed us a fine rule: For him who comes to be purified, the way is cleared and he is extended a helping hand.