



תשובה - Repentance

High Holy Day Greetings in Messiah,

Repentance: the Need of the Hour!

"Avinu Malkeinu, hahazireinu biteshuvah shleimah lefanekha.

Our Father, Our King, bring us back before Thee in full repentance."

Repentance, *teshuvah* in Hebrew, is one of the basic 613 commandments in traditional Judaism. It is also the fifth blessing in the *Amidah* or *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, the most important prayer in the Hebrew Prayer Book. The *Amidah* is the universally accepted prayer in Judaism, much like the "Lord's Prayer" in Christianity. Repentance, in this prayer, is understood to mean a turning away from sins both of commission and omission, and turning toward God: *"Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our King, to Your service, and influence us to return in perfect repentance before You. Blessed are You, HASHEM, Who desires repentance."*

Teshuvah is also a major theme of the High Holy Days. The solemn ten-day period between *Yom Teruah* (the Day of Trumpets) and *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) is often referred to as the Days of Awe or the Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*). This year the Days of Awe began on September 29 and end on October 8, 2008. The Sabbath that occurs in the middle of these ten days has a special name: *Shabbat Shuva*, meaning "Sabbath of Return," or "Sabbath of Repentance." (October 3–4 this year). Special portions from the Prophets are read on this Shabbat that deal with the theme of repentance. Included are Hosea 14:1-2. *"O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; take words with you, and return to the Lord. Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity...'"* Micah 7:18 is read as well, *"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?"* Joel 2:15-27 includes portions that are particularly poignant this year: *"Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly...Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, 'Spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach...'"*

Repentance in Hebrew Biblical thinking is not an emotion. It is a decision, an act of the will. *Teshuvah* comes from the verb *shub* which literally means to turn around, return, or renounce. It suggests, as Marvin Wilson points out in **Our Father Abraham**, a "spiritual about-face." Maimonides, the renowned 12th century medieval Jewish theologian and philosopher, divided *teshuvah* into four specific steps: 1) Confession or acknowledgment of guilt (*vidduy* in Hebrew)—a good example of this confession of sin in the *Tenach* can be found in Nehemiah 1:4-10, and in the New Covenant in Luke 15:18. 2) Remorse, regret, contrition, sorrow over having committed sin (*charatah* in Hebrew)—a good example of this type of remorse is King David's prayer. (See Psalm 51:17.) In the New Covenant, Peter displays this same shame and brokenness (Luke 5:8). 3) A strong resolution not to commit the sin again, and restitution where necessary (*shalem* in Hebrew)—we see this in Leviticus 5:16 in the *Tenach* and Luke 19:8 with Zacchaeus in the New Covenant Scriptures. 4) Reconciliation with God.

Repentance and the Book of Jonah

The entire book of Jonah is read during the afternoon *Yom Kippur* service in most traditional synagogues, since this book deals with the theme of repentance. Jonah's name in Hebrew has great significance. Jonah is Hebrew for "dove." His father's name, Amittai is Hebrew for "truth." Thus, *Yonah ben Amittai* means "Dove, son of Truth." What a beautiful picture of the Spirit of God, Who is also the Spirit of Truth, and Who brings conviction of sin and leads men to repent!

The Lord God of Israel gave His servant Jonah an assignment: *"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me"* (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh had sinned and needed to repent. As it turned out, Jonah rebelled against the Word of the Lord, fled from the presence of the Lord, and got on a ship to Tarshish. Jonah needed to repent too! Sam Nadler suggests in his excellent little book, **Messianic Life Lessons from the Book of Jonah**, that Jonah did not want God to forgive Nineveh since he was concerned that if they received his message and repented, Israel would look bad. The prophets Hosea and Amos, contemporaries of Jonah, pleaded with Israel to repent, but to no avail. If wicked Nineveh repented through a single prophet with a simple message, Israel would look very bad. Also, since Jonah had declared that judgment would come to Nineveh—if it did not, Jonah would be considered a false prophet.

Jonah, like Israel today (and many of us), knew God's will and still chose to disobey. Must we be swallowed by a big fish, a *"dag gadol"* before we say "yes" to God? When Jonah looked beyond himself to God, his fellowship with God was restored. Like the prodigal son, he was brought up from "the pit." Jonah, however, had still not really repented. The grace of God got Jonah out of the belly of the whale.

As we read the biblical account, we find that wicked Nineveh was quicker to repent than God's servant Jonah! When the people of Nineveh heard Jonah say, *"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be over-thrown!"* the Bible tells us that they believed in God and called a fast and put on sackcloth *"from the greatest to the least of them."* The Ninevites repented immediately. Their king also repented as soon as he heard the decree and ordered a fast throughout his kingdom: *"But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands"* (Jonah 3:8). Nineveh repented. God saw, and relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them (Jonah 3:10).

America, Repent!

As you read the following verses from the prophet Ezekiel, substitute "America" for "house of Israel": *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. 'Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,' says the Lord God. 'Therefore turn [repent] and live!'"* (Ezekiel 18:30-32)

The U.S.A. today is like wicked Nineveh. We desperately need to repent and turn back to God as a nation. We must pray for a spirit of repentance to sweep over our land, so that we might be spared the judgment of God.

Please seek God—His heart, His will, His forgiveness and His mercy on our country—during the days leading up to the 2008 Presidential Election. Pray that America will somehow experience a new "godly" beginning. Pray that we will become conscious of "sin" again, and return to biblical standards. Pray for yourself, your family, your friends and your neighbors to be deeply sorry for their sin, for the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 7:10, *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."* We need "God awareness," and a de-throning of self as "god." Pray for hardened hearts to be softened, and proud people to have the

grace to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, especially God's servants in full-time ministry. Pray about fasting on October 8, 2008, the Day of Atonement, for our country, its relationship to Israel and repentance in both countries.

God does want to bless America. But America must begin to bless God!

Repentance is Foundational

In Hebrews 6:1-2 in the New Covenant, we find the order of the basic foundations of our faith in Messiah. The first foundational principle is repentance from dead works, the second is faith toward God. Repentance first. Faith second. We have discovered the truth over the years that without true repentance, there can not be true faith. A gospel that says 'only believe' is not the true gospel message.

"Repent" was John's first word concerning the kingdom of God (Matthew 3:1-2).

"Repent" was Yeshua's first word when He began to preach (Matthew 4:17).

"Repent" was the word the disciples used first after being sent out to preach (Mark 6:12).

"Repentance" was to be preached first after Yeshua's resurrection (Luke 24:47).

"Repent" was Peter's instruction to those who heard his first sermon (Acts 2:38).

"Repentance" Paul said, was commanded for "all men everywhere" (Acts 17:30).

"Repent" was what Paul told Gentiles to do (Acts 26:20).

Repent and believe. This is God's order. The first message that Yeshua ever preached is just as valid today: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:15).

What causes people to repent? This is where prayer comes in, since repentance is really supernatural. It begins with God, not with man. As Derek Prince explains in his **Foundation Series**, "Apart from the working of God's grace and the moving of God's Spirit, man left to himself is incapable of repentance." When the psalmist cries out, *"Restore us, O God...and we shall be saved,"* the Hebrew literally says, 'cause us to turn back' (Psalm 80:3,7,19).

It is God who moves first and draws the sinner to repentance by His Holy Spirit. Since the Bible makes it clear in 2 Peter 3:9 that God is *"...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance,"* He takes the initiative in moving on the heart of man to reveal man's sin, his separation from God, and God's great desire to overcome that separation. God is longsuffering in His love towards us; it is His goodness that leads us to repentance. (See Romans 2:4.)

Our fervent prayer is that Israel, as well as America, turns back to God. Then, they will be able to find Messiah. It is important to note that until Israel was called back to God (i.e. through John the Immerser), their long-awaited Messiah could not be revealed to them.

Repent Today!

If you are already a believer in the Messiah Yeshua, repentance should be an abiding attitude, not something that happens once. Self-righteousness creeps in. So does pride. Spiritual laziness. Lack of compassion. Love of the world. Unholy living. May the fear of the Lord, and the goodness and grace of God, help us all to repent of our sin. Yeshua said to believers in Revelation 2:4 who had left their first love, *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works..."* Does this apply to you? All of us need to pay attention to Revelation 3:19, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."*

Perhaps you are reading this and you are not yet a believer in Yeshua as Messiah, Son of God and Savior. The desire of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is that you repent and believe the **Good News** that God made a way for all people, Jew and non-Jew alike, to turn from sin toward God,

and beyond that—to come to know Him in a deep, personal way. While death is the penalty that our sins deserve, God sent His only Son Yeshua to take our place. He died so that we might live. His blood became the eternal blood of atonement. His sacrifice was much more effective than the yearly *Yom Kippur* sacrifices (see Leviticus chapter 16) since they only "covered" sin. Yeshua's sacrifice cleanses us of all sin, and gives us a new nature. If you are ready for a profound change of direction in life, from sin and self-centeredness to God-centeredness, we offer a simple prayer for you to say. If you are sincere when you pray it, you will begin the most exciting adventure of your life, and will have peace with God now and for all eternity.

"God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I confess that I have sinned and broken Your laws. I am truly sorry for my sins, and make a decision today to turn from sin toward You. I repent of all the evil I have done. Thank you, that Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah died for my sins so that I wouldn't have to pay the penalty myself. I put my faith and trust in Him today as my Messiah, Savior and Lord. Help me to understand Your Word so that I can know You, and follow You all the days of my life. I now receive the love of God, the peace of God, and the joy of my salvation, in Yeshua's name. Amen."

To help you begin your new life in Yeshua, contact us at Jewish Jewels 1-800-2Yeshua.

"Turn us back to You, O Lord, and we will be restored; renew our days as of old..." (Lamentations 5:21)

Love in Messiah Yeshua,

Neil & Jamie

Come with us to Israel on May 31, 2009. This Mercy Mission will be our most exciting one yet. The Israeli wedding in Jerusalem will be prophetic, historic and anointed—a once in a lifetime experience!

This month's offers:

Jewish Jewels Blessings Calendar: 2008-2009, 13-month traditional Jewish calendar with Blessings page.

Messianic Life Lessons from the Book of Jonah by Sam Nadler; New revelations on the awesome love of God for all those who are lost and in sin; Discover God's plan for your future; 150 pgs.

Brokenness, Repentance, and Revival, book by Marvin Pressman; An end time message that will stir your heart and renew your spirit; 53 pgs.

In Awe of You, CD by Philip Klein; Enter the throne room of grace with Phil's powerful lyrics; Songs include "Take My Sin, oh God" and "Show Me Thy Ways, oh Lord."

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - October 2008

LOCAL TV STATIONS

STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:	AIRTIME:
AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4	TUE 6:00 PM
FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22	SUN 2:30 PM
FL	Orlando/Cocoa	WTGL TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45	THU 11:30 AM
FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61	SAT 10:30 PM
GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16	SUN 2:30 PM
IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40	SUN 1:30 PM
IL	Peoria	FAITH ALIVE CH 20	FRI 6:00 PM
MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25	SUN 1:30 PM
NJ/NY	NJ/New York	WMBC TV 63	SUN 4:00 PM
OH	Columbus	WSFJ TV 51	SUN 3:30 PM
OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26	SUN 12:00 PM
OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21	SUN 12:00 PM
SC	Greenville	WGGS TV 16	FRI 10:30 AM

SATELLITE NETWORKS

DirecTV

World Harvest TV (WHT) - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 367]

Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 376]

God TV - The GOD Channel

WED 4:30 AM (GMT) & 6:30 AM (Jerusalem)

Digital Satellite Receiver

World Harvest TV (WHT) - C-Band - Galaxy 16 -

Transponder 15 - 99° W - SUN 3:00 PM (EST)

INTERNET

View our program on the web for **FREE** at:

www.jewishjewels.org

View the following IPTV Services on www.skyangel.com:

GTN - SUN 3:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 109]

WHT - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 130]

