YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Reading *Yona* with the Rambam, the Rav, and R. Lichtenstein**

**Prof. Alan Jotkowitz**

The earliest commentators maintained, based on *Chazal*, that *Sefer* *Yona* was written in order to teach us the power of *teshuva* and the almost infinite mercy of God. For example, the Radak writes:

One may ask: Why was this *sefer* included among the holy books? After all, it is all about Nineveh, which is a gentile nation, and it does not discuss Yisrael at all, and there is no other story in the *Nevi’im* like it. One can suggest that it was written to give *mussar* to Yisrael, because a gentile nation immediately repented after the first time it was rebuked, as opposed to Yisrael, who were rebuked many times but did not repent… And also to teach that God has mercy on all those who repent, Jew and gentile, and He forgives all, especially if they are many.[[1]](#footnote-1)

For this reason, *Sefer Yona* was the obvious choice to be read on the one day of the year devoted exclusively to repentance and forgiveness – Yom Kippur. However obvious this assertion seems to us, though, a close reading of the text can deepen our understanding of the *teshuva* process in all its manifestations. In particular, through a theological approach to the *sefer*, based on the accumulated wisdom of our greatest rabbinical thinkers throughout the generations, we can come to a deeper and more profound understanding of the *sefer* and of the nature of *teshuva* itself.

The structure of the book is highly instructive. For example, the first and third chapters are connected, as are the second and fourth. The first chapter describes how Yona refused God's mission, as well as the *teshuva* of the sailors; in the third chapter, Yona fulfills God's wishes, and we read of the *teshuva* of Nineveh. The second chapter is about Yona, alone with God and nature, praying for God to save his life and his return to God; in the fourth chapter, Yona prays to die, and he is again alone with God and nature. The repetitive nature of the *sefer* highlights the reparative nature of *teshuva* and the opportunity that God, in His mercy, gives man to atone for his past misdeeds.

**First Chapter: The Tempest at Sea**

The book begins with God commanding Yona to go to Nineveh, presumably to warn them of their imminent destruction and exhort them to repent. For reasons that will become clearer in the third chapter, Yona decides to flee to Tarshish, an ancient city that is described in *Tanakh* as a place where the people do not know God.[[2]](#footnote-2) The book emphasizes that Yona chooses to flee from "before God." The rest of the chapter then describes Yona's actions as a metaphor for his descent and wallowing in sin, emphasizing his extreme passivity in the face of mortal danger. For example:

Yona went to flee to Tarshish from before God's presence. He went **down** to Yaffo and found a Tarshish bound vessel; he paid its fare and went **down** into the ship to travel with them to Tarshish away from God. (*Yona* 1:3)

But Yona went **down** to one of the ship's holds and had lain down and fallen asleep. (ibid. 1:5)

These literary allusions echo R. Soloveitchik's description of the death of the *se’ir hamishtalei’ach*, the sacrificial scapegoat:

The *mishna* in *Yoma* describes the ultimate fate of the scapegoat in the ritual: "It went backward, and it rolled and descended until it was halfway down the mountain, where it became dismembered into many parts." Can there be a more accurate description of what sin itself does to a person? Even before his total descent, he is broken apart, an object victim of gravity. Sin transforms a person into someone who is acted upon or influenced… Regarding sin, an analogy is made to sleep. Sleep is an absolute passive state, in which man is a pure object. The insistent demands of the *shofar*, according to the Rambam, is the imperative to awaken oneself.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The call of the ship captain to Yona to wake up – "How can you sleep so soundly?! Arise, call to your God. Perhaps God will pay us mind and we will not perish" (ibid. 1:6) – can be seen as analogous to the sound of the *shofar* of Rosh Hashana, the purpose of whichis to awaken us from our sinful stupor. As the Rambam writes:

Even though the blowing of the *shofar* on Rosh Hashana is a divine decree, a hint of its purpose was given to us: to awaken the sleeping from their slumber and the comatose from their stupor in order to search their actions and return with *teshuva*. (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 3:4)

The first chapter also deals with the response of the sailors to the terrible storm that threatened their ship and lives. The story repeatedly describes the fear of the sailors and their prayers and entreaties to God:

The sailors became **frightened** and cried out each to his own God. (*Yona* 1:5)

The men were seized with great **fear.** (ibid. 1:10)

Then the men **feared** God greatly. (ibid. 1:16)

Thechapter ends with the sailors "offering a sacrifice to God and taking vows." They appear to exemplify the process of *teshuva mei-yira*, repentance from fear, whose impetus is crisis but is nevertheless acceptable and even praiseworthy in the eyes of God.

A careful reading notices a transition of the fear of the sailors, from fearing many Gods to fearing the one true God, *Hashem*. The *Midrash* picks up on this and cites a tradition that the "sailors threw their false Gods into the sea [with Yona], returned to Yaffo, went up to Jerusalem, and were circumcised."[[4]](#footnote-4)

This kind of *teshuva* seems particularly appropriate for Rosh Hashana, the day of year where the Jewish People in a sense crown God as the King of the world and accept his dominion, as beautifully expressed in the *Malkhiyot* prayers of *Musaf*. Rosh Hashana has a universal aspect to it as well, as the kingship of God applies to all the nations of the world. It was this kingship that the sailors recognized and paid homage to with their prayers, sacrifices, and repentance.

In the firstchapter, Yona identifies himself: "I am an *Ivri,* and God, the God of the Heavens do I fear" (*Yona* 1:9). This description echoes how the Torah describes Avraham Avinu, the first person who was called an *Ivri* (*Bereishit* 14:13), who was distinguished by his fear of God, which he famously demonstrated at the *akeida*. But in contradistinction to Avraham, who immediately left everything that was familiar to him to heed God's call of “*lekh-lekha*,” Yona ran away from his charge and destiny to place "where they did not know God.”

In the midst of their distress, the sailors decided on lots to determine which of the passengers was the guilty party. A society that relies on lots is one that feels that fate is what decides destiny; humans have no ability to control their own fate. This easily leads to reliance on false gods and mystical beliefs. This perspective does not recognize the controlling hand of God in history, which was Avraham's great lesson to humanity.

The "casting of lots" is also an allusion to the lottery that occurred in the Temple on Yom Kippur to select the *se’ir ha-mishtalei’ach*. In fact, after Yona was chosen, “they picked up Yona and heaved him into the sea” – remarkably parallel to the fate of the scapegoat. Like the scapegoat, Yona was chosen to be cast off from God's presence, and like the vessels that were cast of the ship to lighten the load, Yona was reduced to a passive object.

This literary device also marks a transition from the universal themes of Rosh Hashanafound in the chapter to motifs of Yom Kippur, a day dedicated to the relationship between God and the Jewish People.

**Second Chapter: Alone in the Depths**

Yona, the doomed scapegoat, was miraculously saved, and after three days and nights of contemplation, he offered a prayer to God. There is some textual ambiguity regarding when exactly this prayer was said – before or after he reached safe harbor. The simple reading of the text is that it was before he was deposited on dry land, but that approach immediately raises the question of how he managed to pray for salvation if he wasn’t completely out of danger. In addition, many commentators are perplexed by the combination of both lament and thanksgiving elements in Yona's prayer.

I think the text is purposely ambiguous, and this gets to the heart of the nature of Yona's repentance. As opposed to the sailors, his repentance was a *teshuva* *mei-ahava* (love), not *mei-yira* (fear). The main thrust of his prayer is his desire to be once again in the presence of God. In the firstchapter, *Yona* runs from God; in the second chapter, he returns to God. The desire to have a relationship with God is the hallmark of *teshuva mei-ahava*, as the Rambam so beautifully describes in the seventh chapterof *Hilkhot Teshuva*:

How exalted is the level of *teshuva*! Only yesterday this sinner was separated from God, the Lord of Israel… He would call out [to God] without being answered… He would perform *mitzvot*, only to have them thrown back in his face… Today [after having repented], he clings to the Divine Presence… He calls out [to God] and is answered immediately.

This clinging to God of the *ba’al teshuva* described by the Rambam here culminates in the loving Man-God relationship described in the tenth chapter of *Hilkhot Teshuva*:

And how can we describe the great love that one should have for God? That his soul should be bound up with the love of God and infatuated with Him like a person who is lovesick for a certain woman and cannot stop thinking about her, whether he is standing or sitting, eating or drinking – greater than this should be one's love of God.

As opposed to *teshuva mei-yira*, *teshuva mei-ahava* is not crisis-driven; the relationship desired with God exists independent of crisis. One should walk with God before and after a traumatic life episode.

This is beautifully described in Yona's prayer: "I called in my **distress**, to God" (*Yona* 2:3) and later in the prayer, "But as for me, with a voice of **gratitude** will I bring offerings to You” (ibid. 2:10). Yona prays to God both in distress and in gratitude. The prayer ends with the verse, "What I have vowed I will **fulfill**" (ibid.), as opposed to the first chapter,which ends simply with "and they offered sacrifice to God and took vows.” In times of crisis, people sometimes make vows that they do not fulfill. Yona's *teshuva* emphasizes his promise not only to make vows but to fulfill them as well, which becomes readily apparent in the nextchapter.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Some scholars have asserted that the prayer is a later addition into the text of the story, but I think that approach is untenable. Twice Yona repeats in the prayer his desire to meet God once again in the Holy Temple. This is his expression of his desire to repair his relationship, which was fractured when Yona ran to a city "where they do not know God.” In addition, prayer is the ultimate expression of *teshuva mei-ahava* as a spiritual expression of "standing before God.” Through the miracle of *teshuva* and God's compassion, Yona was transformed from the scapegoat to the *seir la-Hashem* (the identical animal in the lottery), which was brought to the Holy Temple before God.

The Malbim, based on the Ibn Ezra, makes the point that Yona ran *mi-lifnei Hashem* and not *mipnei Hashem*:

*Mipnei Hashem* is from the knowledge and providence of God, which is impossible to run from, but *lifnei Hashem* is running from God's presence and the desire to cling to God, from which one can run.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The theme of the second chapter is Yona's desire to once again be *lifnei Hashem* in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and the prayer is Yona's verbal expression of this wish.

In a recently printed collection of *teshuva derashot*, R. Lichtenstein differentiates between moral and religious *teshuva*:

The moral aspect of *teshuva* focuses on the sinful act as an incarnate, evil reality. In this sense, sin's impact is multiple. There is, first, the specific wrong in its naked isolation. Second, it has a contaminating effect upon the world… Third, the sin has a contaminating effect upon the sinner's soul…the religious impact of sin, with reference not to the act but to our relationship with the Almighty… Sin establishes a divisive barrier that interposes between the sinner and the Almighty.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The essence of Yona's *teshuva*, to use the terminology of R. Lichtenstein, was religious in nature. The chapter begins with God "designating" a fish to save Yona. This is the opposite of living in a world controlled by fate, as the sailors originally believed. Life choices are not arbitrary, like the flipping of a coin, but are controlled by God, who "designates" at the appropriate time messengers to do His will. We will meet other "designees" of God in the fourth chapter as well.

**Third Chapter**: **Turmoil in Nineveh**

The third chapter begins one again with God's call to go to Nineveh, and, as we expect Yona the *baal teshuva* immediately rectifies his ways and fulfills God's command. The Rambam explains that this is the true mark of complete repentance:

What is complete *teshuva*? If one has the possibility to do the sin again but does not because of *teshuva*, and not because of fear or weakness. For example, if one had forbidden relations with a woman and once again one is alone with the woman in the same place, and he still loves and desires her, but he does not sin, that is complete *teshuva.* (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 2:1)

Somewhat surprisingly, the people and leadership of Nineveh immediately accept Yona's prophecy and repent from their evil ways. One would have thought that the story should have ended here with a happy ending, a great city saved by a heroic prophet. In fact, the *mishna* in *Ta’anit* (2:1) uses the repentance of Nineveh as the archetype of great and sincere communal *teshuva*. Themes of *neila* (which is also recited on a communal fast day) seem prominent in this chapter. The chapter underscores the spiritual and moral equivalence and worthlessness of man and beast in terms of both their sinning and their repentance. This is a prominent motif in *neila*, where we cry out, "The preeminence of man over beast is nonexistent, for all is vain.”

**Fourth Chapter: Alone Again**

But the fourth chapter begins unexpectedly with the verse, "This displeased Yona greatly and it grieved him" (*Yona* 4:1). Why Yona was so angry about the saving of Nineveh? Yona himself answers the question:

Please, God, was this not my contention when I was still on my own soil?! I therefore had hastened to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, and relentful of punishment. So now, God, please take my life from me, for better is my death than my life. (*Yona* 4:2-3)

What's missing from this reformulation of the thirteen attributes of God is the attribute of "truth.” Yona ben Amitai, Yona the “son of truth,” could not tolerate falsehood. He could not accept a world that was not built on truth, and for some reason, he did not feel that the *teshuva* of Nineveh was authentic and sincere.

There is some textual support for this contention. If one reads the third chapter closely, there are some subtle anomalies. For example, the king commands both man and animal to fast and wear sackcloth (*Yona* 3:7). What is the purpose of the animals fasting and wearing mourning clothes? One gets the impression that the people of Nineveh are simply putting on a show to avoid their destruction, without any real introspection and sincerity. R. Yochanan, commenting on the verse, "Each person is to turn back from evil and from the stolen goods which are in their hands” (ibid. 3:8), maintained that they only gave back the stolen goods that were in their hands – not those that were in their storerooms. In fact, Reish Lakish (a *ba’al teshuva* himself) called the repentance of Nineveh "false *teshuva*.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

This reality is what shook Yona, the man of truth, to his core. How could a God of truth accept false *teshuva*? This is what God tried to answer him with the lesson of the *kikayon*. Yona was upset when God was not merciful towards him when he destroyed his shade; how can he be upset with God for being merciful on the great city of Nineveh? The world cannot be solely ruled by truth. In order for man to survive, mercy must predominant. In this chapter, Yona is contrasted with Moshe, who first prayed using the thirteen attributes of God, but was willing to pray for God's mercy even before Israel repented.

A variation of this approach is offered by the Malbim, who comments that Yona maintained that "the edict to destroy Nineveh should not be lifted until Nineveh repents from their false theology as well as their evil actions, and they only repented from their evil ways.” In the terminology of R. Lichtenstein, they only performed moral *teshuva*, not religious *teshuva*.

On a deeper level, I think the metaphor of the *kikayon* has something more profound to teach us. The word *kikayon* sounds a little like Yona. Stretching one's imagination a little, one can see in the word a combination of *va-yeki* and Yona – and Yona was indeed expunged, *va-yeki*, from the great fish. This might appear to be a silly word game, but a close reading of the text tells us that what happened to the *kikayon* exactly parallels what happens to Yona:

Then God **designated** a worm at the dawn of the morrow, and it attacked the *kikayon* so that it **withered.** (*Yona* 4:7)

God **designated** a stifling east wind, the sun beat upon Yona's head and he became **faint.** (ibid. 4:8)

Just like Yona was compared to the *se’ir ha-mishtalei’ach* in the first chapter and the *se’ir la-Hashem* in the second chapter, in the fourth chapter he becomes the *kikayon,* to teach us that just like the *kikayon*'s existence is totally dependent on God's mercy, so is Yona's existence. Yona himself cannot survive in a world of truth. He also is dependent on God's mercy.

There is also a similarity to the second chapter, an element of ambiguity in the exact timing of when Yona left the city and built his *sukka*. Was it before or after God forgave the people of Nineveh? This ambiguity is also reflected in the metaphor of the *kikayon*. The *kikayon* is first introduced as follows:

God **designated** a *kikayon* which rose up above Yona to form a shade over his head to save him from his discomfort and Yona rejoiced greatly over the *kikayon*. (ibid. 4:6)

When one first reads thisverse, one immediately thinks back to the great fish, which God also designated to save Yona and which covered him completely. The Malbim comments that when Yona was expelled from the fish, it was like he was reborn. The ambiguity is therefore compounded. Was the *kikayon* summoned by God to save Yona or to serve as a metaphor for his death?

I think the ambiguity and the subsequent silence of the text on the ultimate outcome of Yona is intended to teach a crucial lesson in *teshuva*. If in the first chapter Yona's destiny was decided by fate, as demonstrated by the lots, and in the second chapter through the actions of God in summoning a fish to save Yona, in the fourth chapter the choice is left up to Yona. Does the *kikayon* herald his salvation or his demise? This might be reason that the *sefer* ends with a question:

And should I not take mercy upon the great city of Nineveh in which there are more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their left from their right and a great number of animals as well? (ibid. 4:11)

The question is directed at Yona and underscores the point that just like the question is his to answer, so too is his final disposition dependent on his actions as well. This recalls the famous exclamation of R. Elazar ben Durdia, "It [i.e. attaining forgiveness] is entirely dependent upon me” (*Avoda Zara* 17a).

**Theological Implications**

So who is right – God or Yona, the Sages of the *Mishna* of *Taanit* or the repentant thief, Reish Lakish? Should we accept half-hearted or false repentance?

I think the answer depends on whose perspective we are looking at the question from. From our perspective, we should demand of ourselves sincere and authentic *teshuva*, which entails hard work, sacrifice and complete honesty regarding who we are and where we stand. R. Lichtenstein writes that even if we cannot guarantee perfect results to God in our quest for atonement:

The *teshuva sheleima*, complete repentance for which we pray in the *Amida* and in *Aveinu Malkanu*, is defined fundamentally by spiritual input, and not solely or primarily by the level of results. When a *beinoni*, a mediocre person, engages in *teshuva*, the objective result will inevitably be mediocre as well, as it proceeds from a mediocre mind and a mediocre soul…but this kind of mediocrity is much less critical in defining complete *teshuva*. Where there is mediocrity in attainment and achievement but no mediocrity in exertion and intent, that is indeed *teshuva sheleima*. There are three tests that can be used to ascertain whether *teshuva sheleima* has been achieved: the question of initiative, the question of concomitant attitude, and the question of aspiration.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In order to achieve *teshuva sheleima*, even if we cannot guarantee results, God demands of us maximum effort in initiative, attitude, and aspiration – which I fear is a high bar for many of us *beinoni*s! It is this commitment that Yona, the man of truth, demands of Nineveh and of us.

Sometimes on Yom Kippur we do not stand before God as potential penitents, but rather on some level assume the role of Judge. I am referring to the famous halakha in the Rambam in which he discusses how one obtains absolution when one has wronged his or her fellow man:

It is forbidden to be vengeful and spiteful, but rather one should be easily pacified and slow to anger, and when the sinner asks for forgiveness, he should forgive wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. And even if he caused you great pain and sinned against you, one should not take revenge or bear a grudge. (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 2:10)

When it comes to accepting the *teshuva* of others, the Rambam is teaching us that one should not demand compete *teshuva*, but should be satisfied with the *teshuva* of the people of Nineveh, which is sometimes the best that imperfect people can attain. We have all witnessed situations in which almost imperceptible slights have torn families or friendships apart, with the aggrieved party unable to accept the sinner’s imperfect efforts at reconciliation. While this may appear to be a homiletic interpretation of the *sefer*, we should remember that the main lesson that the *sefer* is trying to teach relates more to the nature of forgiveness, as opposed to repentance, and for Man this message is most relevant when he or she is placed in the position of a forgiver.

**Our Father in Heaven**

But even if we rule like God and the Sages of the *Mishna*, the question still needs to be answered. How can God accept half-hearted or false *teshuva*? Is that all he expects of us in order for us to receive His forgiveness? I think the story of Yona is teaching us a universal truth about how repentance works. For most of us, it is a difficult and drawn-out process filled with many peaks and valleys; very few of us immediately undergo the complete change of personality needed to be a complete *baal teshuva*. God is teaching us the power of partial *teshuva*, as expressed beautifully by R. Lichtenstein:

Nevertheless, existentiality, the demand for totality and comprehensiveness is simply awesome, even overwhelming… Will our normal, stumbling selves, willing of spirit but weak and incontinent of flesh, plugging a hole here and leaving another there, be barred at the door? If few of us ever get beyond selective and fragmentary *teshuva*, will that *teshuva* be dismissed peremptorily as inadequate? We only hope and pray that the answer is no… But of course the hope and the aspiration, and the test of purity on a lifelong basis, is the fact that we strive to grow incrementally over the years. We strive for a purity that applies not only "where we are,” but that enables us to approach and strive for the ultimate purity.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The Rambam teaches us that in addition to complete *teshuva*, there is an incomplete *teshuva* that is also accepted. In continuation of the *halakha* quoted above, the Rambam writes:

If one only returns when one is old, when one is unable to sin, even though it is not exceptional *teshuva*, it works for him and he is a *baal teshuva*. Even if he sinned all his life but did *teshuva* on the day of his death, all his sins are forgiven. (*Hilkhot Teshuva* 2:10)

What is the difference between the two cases the Rambam cites? I think the first case is dealing with someone who, in the words of R. Lichtenstein, "strives to grow incrementally over the years" and only in his old age succeeds fully to be called a *baal teshuva*; the struggle is a lifelong one. This is as opposed to the person who only decides to return on the day of his death. Even though his sins are forgiven, he does not merit to be called a *baal teshuva*.

Why, then, does partial teshuva work? To answer that question, we have to better understand the relationship between a person and his or her Creator. In the first chapter of *Yona*,the sailors related to God as the Master of the Universe, and that is the basis for *teshuva mei-yira*. In the second chapter, Yona related to God as a lover, and that is the basis for *teshuva mei-ahava*. But Yona forgot that there is another way to relate to God, and that is as a parent. A king may forgive his errant subject once but not twice; a scorned lover might never forgive the adulterous partner. But a loving parent will always forgive – and that is the ultimate message of Yona and partial *teshuva*.

R. Akiva's famous homily at the end of *Yoma* makes the same point:

Happy are you, O Israel, before whom you are purified and who purifies you? Your **Father** in Heaven.

As R. Soloveitchik explains, our best hope is to reach out not to our King in Heaven, but our **Father** in Heaven to attain purity and atonement on Yom Kippur.

**Yona in the *Sukka*: *Neila***

*Neila* does not end with man being equated with the animal, but with the following prayer:

Nevertheless, you set man apart from the beginning and You considered him worthy to stand before You, for who can tell You what to do and if he is righteous what can he give you? Now you gave us, *Hashem*, our God, with love this Day of Atonement for redemption, pardon, and forgiveness for all our iniquities, so that we may withdraw our hands from theft and return to You, to carry out the decrees of Your will wholeheartedly. And may You, in Your abundant mercy, have mercy on us, because You do not desire the world's destruction.

Man is different than beast. Even if complete *teshuva* is inaccessible to many of us, God in His infinite mercy will accept out partial and imperfect *teshuva.* That is the lesson of the story of Yona.

The story could have had another ending if Yona had accepted the gift of partial *teshuva*. Yona built himself a real *sukka*: "Yona left the city and sat in the eastern side and made himself a *sukka* and sat under it in the shade until he would see what would occur in the city" (*Yona* 4:5). Instead, he could have built the *sukka* of R. Eliezer, which does not represent shelter from physical forces, but rather the "clouds of glory" that covered the Jewish People during their travels in the desert (see Sukka 11b). This *sukka* is a physical manifestation of being in the presence of God, and it would have brought Yona full circle from running from God's presence to basking in his glory and love.

As we transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkot, we pray that God accepts our imperfect human *teshuva* and gives us the sacred opportunity to live in His Presence.

1. Radak, *Yona* 1:1, s.v. *vayehi devar Hashem*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Yeshayahu (66:18-19). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. R. Soloveitchik, *Before Hashem You Shall be Purified* (Ohr Publishing, 1998), p.32. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Yalkut Shimoni 550:2 and see Rashi s.v. *veyidru nedarim* that they converted. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This observation that in a time of crisis people make vows or promises that they do not keep may be the reason we begin Yom Kippur with *Kol Nidrei*. Before we request atonement for our current sins, we must first absolve ourselves of all the false promises we made the previous Yom Kippurand request permission to pray with sinners (e.g. all of us who do not fulfil our vows). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Malbim*, *Yona* 1:3, s.v. *vayakam Yona le-vro’ach tarshisha*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. R. Aharon Lichtenstein, *Return and Renewal: Reflections on Teshuva and Spiritual Growth* (Maggid Books, 2018), p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Yerushalmi Taanit 2:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. R. Lichtenstein, *Return and Renewal*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. R. Lichtenstein, *Return and Renewal*, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)