

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

YOM KIPPUR

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FACE TIME WITH THE DIVINE



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What makes a guest coming to visit special? It is rarely the gift that your visitor brings. The joy comes from simple fact that they came. Their time and presence say, “you matter to me.”

On Yom Kippur we stand before God asking for forgiveness and hoping to be inscribed for a good year. In addition to this, there is another side to Yom Kippur, an opportunity to enjoy the fact that God wants a relationship with us.

Rabbi Yehudah Amital (a prominent Israeli rabbi, 1924-2010) used this idea about the role of prayer and our relationship with God in an analogy.

Imagine three grown children whose elderly parent lives in a care home in another town. The first child is able to visit regularly, does so and personally brings them the shopping from the weekly list. The second child, further away, sends a cheque every month and sets up an online supermarket delivery. The third child, perhaps overseas, sets up a standing order, ensuring the money arrives automatically without any further effort.

All three children provide for their parent’s needs. Yet if you were the parent, which relationship is the one you are most likely to prefer? The first child does more than fulfil an obligation. They come in person and spends time with their parent. They happen to have brought the essentials, but the relationship itself matters.

During the year when we are busy,

our prayers can resemble the second or third child. We do pray and we keep the routines, but Yom Kippur reminds us that God wants us to connect with Him and spend time with him.

When we pray, we are not simply submitting requests or reciting words. We are entering into a conversation, our “facetime” with God. We turn up, just as the devoted child shows up for a parent.

The prophet Yeshayahu captures this idea in the words

“Seek God when He may be found; call to Him when He is near” (Isaiah, 55:6).

On Yom Kippur, God is especially close, waiting not only to hear our requests but also to welcome our presence. Like the child who makes the journey to visit their parent, our task is to show up and invest in our relationship with God.

Yom Kippur – Story of Yonah (Jonah)

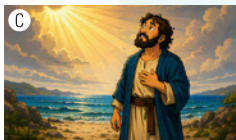
Reorganise the boxes below to tell the story of Yonah and the big fish



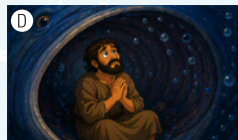
A huge storm threatens to sink the ship. The sailors pray – but Yonah sleeps.



The people of Nineveh listen and do full *teshuvah* – everyone, even the king.



God tells Yonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn them to do *teshuvah* (repent).



God sends a big fish to save Yonah. Inside, Yonah finally prays.



Yonah struggles with God’s compassion. God teaches him about caring for all people.



Yonah admits the storm is because of him and tells them to throw him overboard.



Instead of listening, Yonah runs away – trying to escape his mission.



Yonah gets a second chance – and this time, he goes.