A Medrash which says. They asked wisdom. A sinner what is his punishment. He said Let them be pursued by their sins. They asked prophecy what is the sinner's punishment. It said The soul that sins it shall die. They asked Torah what is the punishment of the sinner. The Torah said The sinner should bring a guilt offering and gain atonement. They asked the holy one blessed be he What is the punishment of the sinner. It said Let him repent and gain atonement. We human beings composed of many parts. The word sin in Hebrew means to miss the mark. Wisdom, intellect does not always reflect total personality. Many times our intellect tells us something but we pay no attention. We say all the right things but they make no impression on us. Our intellect tells us something is bad. We read all the government statistics but we do nothing about it. The sins pursue us. All of us has a feeling of prophecy, of about us. We all have a inner joy. When we are overwhelmed by guilt this part of us is killed. The story of Omnor and Tamar. At the end he hated her more than loved her. He became disgusted with himself. And this disgust spilled over. All of us need to know that we have a place in the world. All of us need to have a purpose or meaning in life. That's what Torah gives us. When we bored, have no purpose, we're unhappy. We must sacrifice for something to be happy. No sacrifice we can't overcome sin. We can't help but miss the mark. Each of us has a piece of G-d in us. Even after sin. That's why it says Addem, twice. There is a yearning, a bringing on unhappiness with ourselves when we don't strive for the best within us. We feel alienated, alone. Our piece of G-d within us isn't joined to G-d outside of us in a certain sense. We need to feel part of something greater than us. What do we pray for on this holiday? One thing I ask from G-d, read it, I ask to be one, to not miss mark. If our intellect integrated with our other senses, if our sense of purity and joy not diminished, if we have something to sacrifice for, and if we feel part of a larger whole we will not miss the mark, we will be one and be one with the L-rd our G-d.

SELICHOS 1979
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

We have to examine ourselves four days before Rosh Hashonna. We are the Korban on Rosh Hashonna. Before when they offered a sacrifice they had to inspect the Korben for four days. For all sacrifices it says V'hechsavteem oleh. On Rosh Hashonna it says VaAseeseem Olon. You should make yourself the Korben. You have to examine and inspect yourself. We have to do Teshuva. Teshuva in Hebrew not the same concept as the English repentence. Repentence means to shut in, to limit, to be in a fence, to be caged. Teshuva means a reply. It means to return to our true nature. The only time Teshuva is mentioned in Tenach is when it talks about Shmuel. Shmuel is the prophet whose home was Ranah. From there he went on a circuit to other cities until he completed his circle and came home. That is the same as with Teshuva. Sometimes it looks like we're going farther away when really we're coming closer all the time. Lots of times when we look at youngsters who are going far out what they are telling us is that spiritual things are real, a swimming pool by home can't satisfy them. You can have all the money and wealth and all the adulation like Elvis Presley although don't know why, and still be dead inside. We all lead two lives, an inner life and an outer life, and our inner life by far is more important. We must have an inner life. If we don't we'll become desperate and destroy ourselves through drugs, etc. We need spiritual values. We need to return to our roots. That's what Teshuva means. We have a parable which says, they asked wisdom what is the sinner's punishment. It told them, sinners let them be pursued by their evil. They asked prophecy, what is the sinner's punishment. It told them, the sould that sins it shall die. They asked Torah, it told them, let him bring an offering. They asked G-d, He told them, let them repent, do Teshuva. Evil pursues us - victim of our evil time. No inner life, dead inside if sin. We need to make repention. But most of all, we have to feel happy with ourselves. We must be pure, otherwise bad. G-d doesn't ever tell about punishment. He just says we must not rationalize, we mustn't make excuses. We have to say I'm sorry. Chatosi. In Hebrew Chatese doesn't mean sin, it means I missed the mark. We must learn how to say I made a mistake. Sometimes from a little mistake things happen. From mistake of counting the Jews worshipped Golden Calf. Didn't really make a mistake. We have to realize we make mistake. We have to say we're sorry. If we do we can return to our roots, we can start our clean.

SELICHOS

The Sephardeem begin selichos from the beginning of the month of Elul. Elul stands for I am my beloved and my beloved is mine. The relationship between G-d and Israel is always pictured as a relationship of lovers of the marriage relationship. G-d loves us and is concerned about us. Our aim is to get close to Him. The word means to forgive but it means more than that, it means a fence for knowledge. During this month we do Teshuvah. What does Teshuvah mean? It just doesn't mean to repent, to stop doing evil. It means to realize that we haven't fulfilled all our potential that we can still do more and be better people. We must develop ourselves more. We must have even a better relationship with our fellow human beings and with G-d. During the selichos we say G-d we haven't done hardly enough good deeds and kindness. Is kindness different than good deed? No. But you could do good deeds in such a way as to make a person hate you. You must be filled with kindness. It must be part of you and exude from you. It must become so much part of you that it spontaneously appears. We speak about the Ratzer Elyan and the Ratza Tachtan. The most important things in life happen almost spontaneously. We aren't bookkeeper. When you love someone, when you choose a career you don't do it like a bookkeeper. You just know. If you have to sit down and add all the pluses and minuses then you are in trouble. During Elul we say the special prayer L'Dovid Ori. In it we ask one thing, to sit in house of Lord. The Rabbis say we shouldn't interpret it to mean ask one thing but we ask to be one, to be whole, to be not split a million different ways. We have to be alone with ourselves otherwise we won't have this kindness, this close relationship with G-d. We also blow the shofar when the moon covered. Some say when moon full although we know on Rosh Hashonna moon is covered just a little sliver. When judging others we must judge them like usually judge ourselves. When judge ourselves we go by our intentions , by what's covered. Not by results. When judge others judge by results not intentions. If we are to have this oneness, we're to have this close relationship with G-d we must try to reach our potential we must have this binding kindness not be super critical of others.

Story about man lived between fertilizer plant, dump, glue factory, and slaughter house. Wanted to know which way wind blow. Only interested in neighbors garbage not his.

Our self

SELICHOS 1976

We must be careful about mistakes. Mistakes can cause a lot of trouble. We must also forgive other people for mistakes they make. Why High Holidays during the 7th month. Because of the golden calf. Only on Yom Kippur Jews forgiven. It was all a mistake. They calculated wrong when Moshe would come down. They panicked. They couldn't understand that in Judaism true beauty is not static but is dynamic and linked to improvement. Why did Moshe have them blow the Shofar when he went up to get the second set of the Ten Commandments? Because the word Shofar means to improve, beautiful. They were mistaken about life. A Golden Calf is static. It can't improve. Not true beauty. Why Golden Calf. Because gold is indestructible. It doesn't change. True beauty is not being static. People even today make that mistake. They think true beauty is being 21 all the time. Impossible. True beauty a Sheinah Yid refers to inner qualities not external. We must be careful of our mistakes.