

A text for the Ten Days of Repentance

Designed for younger students

(The 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are dedicated to reflection, self-examination, forgiving, and asking others for forgiveness.)

This Is Just To Say

William Carlos Williams
(1883 – 1963)

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

1. Describe a time you have taken something that didn't belong to you. Did you apologize?
2. Are there times we apologize when we aren't really sorry? How do we show we are really sorry for doing something wrong?
3. Are there other ways to apologize besides saying "I'm sorry?"

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The Place Where We Are Right

by Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.

המקום שבו אנו צודקים

מן המקום שבו אנו צודקים
לא יצמחו לעולם
פרחים באביב

המקום שבו אנו צודקים
הוא רמוס וקשה
כמו חצר

אבל ספקות ואהבות עושים
את העולם לתוח
כמו הפרפרה כמו הריש
ולחיסה תשמע במקום
שבו היה הבית
אשר נחרב

1. What do you think it means by places we are right?
2. What are the places where you are right?
3. Why would destruction come from the places where you are right?
4. How do we forgive or ask for forgiveness when we know we are right?
5. Is it possible there is another side to the story? What might that side look like?
6. What are some of the underlying messages within this poem?
7. Yehuda Amichai is a famous Israeli poet who fought in the IDF. How does this poem relate to Israel? What is it talking about within Israeli society?