

## **(Indeed) (But) we are guilty concerning our brother. (42:21)**

*Teshuva* is a spiritual phenomenon which must be expressed verbally as the *Viduy* (confession). The *Rambam* states that the major part of this Confession consists of the words "ubjbt kct ubtyj". These three words acknowledge man's failure in serving Hashem properly. It may be suggested that the inclusion of the word "but" is not only crucial, but is perhaps the device which allows us not only to sin, but also to maintain a facade of innocence and virtue. Very few people are really mean and malicious. Most people are decent, and truly admire virtue and righteousness. However, we tend to rationalize and find excuses for our misbehavior. We are aware of what is correct, yet we do not follow it, always finding reasons to justify our straying from the proper course. The word "but" represents the exception we take to the life that is good and decent, by justifying and apologizing for ourselves. "But", is the loophole which allows us, even after committing a sin, to act self-righteously and complacently. We will always say "*we wanted to do the right thing but...*"

As the brothers were reliving the selling of Yosef into slavery, they were saying to each other "*Our guilt was that of "but"*". We attempted to excuse and justify our actions, but in retrospect we see it was no more than a mere cover-up. The recognition and acknowledgment of their sin, was the beginning of their repentance.