


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

Friday 7 September 2011 - 10 Tishrei 5772  
**Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement**

**AT-ONE-MENT AND ATUNEMENT**

**K**OL NIDREI IS THE PRAYER WHICH BEGINS THE EVENING SERVICE THIS FRIDAY ON THE NIGHT OF YOM KIPPUR. Many congregations have the custom to begin with a decla-ration that “By authority of the heavenly court and of the earthly court, we declare it permitted to pray together with those who transgress”.

The Jewish people, with all its varied and contrasting members, is one. The “transgressors” might be people who have set themselves outside the Jewish commu-nity. Nonetheless, ultimately, they are still part of the Jewish people and cannot be excluded. The Sages compare the Jewish people to the letters in a Torah Scroll. The Torah speaks of 600, 000 Jews and there is also the idea that there are the same number of letters in a Torah Scroll. As is well known, if one single letter is missing, the Scroll is unfit for use.

This teaches us that every single individual is vital to the entire Jewish people. If one person is missing, spiritually, then the whole people is flawed.

On Yom Kippur we are all lifted to a more spiritual level, at which the unity of the Jewish people is more apparent, and also the spiritual potential of each individual. Many people come to the



Dedicated by Dr Jutta Singer תחילת in Memory of her mother Leah bas Freidel ע"ה - Erev Yom Kippur 5721 (1960)

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Synagogue. There is a warm sense of belonging, of being one family together. Thus on Yom Kippur there is special emphasis on the oneness of the Jewish people, and everyone is welcome.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out that this does not necessarily mean that the person who is being welcomed in the Synagogue has ‘changed’ and has ‘improved’ their behaviour. They might well have the same problems as before. The special quality of Yom Kippur is to welcome them as they are, with all their problematic aspects, and to draw them together with everyone else in the unity of the Jewish people<sup>1</sup>.

Unity together as a nation complements another aspect of unity expressed on Yom Kippur: the intimate connection of each individual with G-d. On Yom Kippur the deepest level of the soul is expressed. At this level the individual almost merges with the Divine, for ultimately our true identity is the spark of G-d within us. On Yom Kippur there is a sense of oneness between the individual and G-d. This joyful union brings light to the dark corners of our personal history and our transgressions are washed away. It is, therefore, truly a Day of forgiveness, of Atonement.

Or you might say, a day of At-One-ment, a day of being at one with G-d, and at one with other people.

But during the course of the day, we do change. Not only do we achieve at-one-ment, but we also seek for atunement, being in tune with G-d. This means little steps forward, making good resolutions for the future, with a sense of renewal. We also need to seek to be in tune with other people. As is well known, Yom Kippur atones for transgressions between the person and G-d, but those relating to other people have to be put right in more tangible, down to earth ways, including making an apology.

On Yom Kippur, everyone is affected by this process. Even the “transgressors” who were mentioned at the beginning of Kol Nidrei. They were welcomed as they are, but perhaps, during the course of Yom Kippur evening, night and day, they too made a positive step forward, in mind and in heart, and were a little bit transformed.

So these are the goals: at-one-ment, and atunement. Once a year, a unique opportunity.

1. See *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 19 p.303.



### YOM KIPPUR

#### **SORRY!**

Chava sat in the classroom, writing industriously. It was still close to the beginning of the year, and she had decided that this year all her work would be perfect. So far it was working. Her teacher was now telling them all the laws of Yom Kippur.

“...Before Yom Kippur we have to make sure that we have asked forgiveness from everyone to whom we have done wrong. We do this because on Yom Kippur we are forgiven offences we have committed against G-d, but if we have done something wrong to another person, G-d will not forgive us unless the person concerned does so first.”

Chava looked at what she had written. Ask forgiveness? She wondered who she had done anything wrong to recently. And then she remembered. Leah, her own twin sister! There were so many mean things she had done to her over the past year - just yesterday she had borrowed her favourite jumper without asking and had then got ketchup on it.

And then there was the time she had eaten all Leah's share of the chocolates from Grandma - her sister had been really upset at that, although it had been (sort of) by accident.

She would have to ask Leah for her forgiveness, Chava decided. And before Yom Kippur. What should she say?

And how? Maybe she should write her a note - on that new strawberry scented notepaper she had got for her birthday. Yes, that would be an excellent idea.

That night she finished her homework quickly, and leaving her sister at the homework **table**, went up to her room, and got out the special notepaper. After much thought, she managed to compose her letter.

*Dear Leah, she wrote, This is to say sorry for anything bad which I have done to you this year and I hope you will forgive me, because it is coming to Yom Kippur. Love your best twin Chava.*

She put it in the envelope, wrote *Leah* on the front, and placed it conspicuously on her sister's pillow.

It was bedtime. The twins were both about to get into their bed. As Chava did so, she gave an exclamation of surprise. For there on her pillow was a yellow lemon scented envelope with *Chava* written on it. She looked at Leah. She was also looking at her envelope with surprise. Chava opened hers and read it.

*Dear Chava, since it is coming up to Yom Kippur I would like to say sorry for any bad things I may have done to you this year and I hope you will forgive me. Love, your favourite twin sister Leah.*

Both sisters looked at each other and burst out laughing.

"I forgive you!" they both said simultaneously.

***Torah teachings are holy –  
please treat this page with care***