


CHABAD

RESEARCH UNIT
 שבת..... *for Friday night*..... קדש
Friday 13 September 2013 - 9 Tishrei 5774
Yom Kippur

RELEASE OF VOWS

STARTING VERY SOFTLY, KOL NIDREI BEGINS. IT IS **S**UNG three times, louder and louder, as if entering a spiritual Palace and coming closer to the Eternal King.

The words of the Kol Nidrei¹ prayer refer to cancelling vows. In 7th century medieval Spain, Jews were forced at sword-point to swear that they will abandon Judaism. It is said that on Yom Kippur they would gather together and formally cancel any such vows, past or future. They could then pray on the Sacred Day with a clear conscience.

In our modern world today, generally no-one forces us to deny Judaism. But our spiritual frailties often lead us to feel that we are restricted, tied down or trapped in various ways, and therefore prevented from full self-expression as Jews. Such as - "I would like to eat kosher but I must eat with my clients at a non-kosher restaurant..." Or - "I simply do not have the time to put on Tefilin"...

These limitations are a form of 'vow', a pledge to the secular domain. On Yom Kippur, in response to our sincerity, G-d



Dedicated by Dr Jutta Singer תחיל
In Memory of her Mother Leah bas Freidel ע"ה
Erev Yom Kippur 5721 (1960)

dissolves away all these restrictions². Whatever our apparent normal commitments and pledges to material and secular values, on Yom Kippur we are given freedom and can openly express total love and dedication to G-d.

Then, when the sacred day draws to a close, and for the rest of the year, it is up to us...

INNER POWER AND JOY

In the Reader's Repetition of the Additional Service (Musaf) on Yom Kippur there is a description of the procedure in the Temple on this day.

The High Priest would pronounce the Divine Name which is otherwise never heard. Hearing this, the people would prostrate themselves. He would also enter the Holy of Holies. Yom Kippur is the only day when anyone could enter this most sacred place. The High Priest would go there, as the representative of the entire Jewish people.

Today the Temple does not yet stand again in Jerusalem, but there is a Temple in the heart of every Jew. Each one of us, man or woman, is the High Priest in our own Temple in our heart.

On Yom Kippur we enter the Holy of Holies and make contact with the Divine Power which dwells within us.

The challenge for each person is to find a way to harness this immense power and to use it in a positive way during the weeks and months ahead. Jewish teaching is the guide, showing how the inner Divine energy can be expressed in every aspect of life. Hence Yom Kippur is a good time for making resolutions about strengthening one's relationship with Jewish teaching and Jewish law. This is the real meaning of the day.

It is a joyous time of spiritual freedom with fresh opportunities to make a permanent step forward in life. Although we fast, and the mood of the day is serious, Yom Kippur is a time of inner joy.

1. Kol Nidrei ("All Vows..") is the melodic prayer sung in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur evening. This begins the Yom Kippur service. 2. This follows an explanation by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (c.1800), in his *Likkutei Torah, Matot* 85a.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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YOM KIPPUR

YOM KIPPUR – ATOM SMASHER

There was a large crowd of people standing around watching in amazement as the wizard whipped the rabbit out of his hat. Chava and Aviva were watching as well, the wizard show was part of the fun-fair that was taking place in their local park.

'Wow!' gasped Chava, 'how does he do that? Do you think it's real magic?' she asked, turning to Aviva. 'He made a newspaper into a ball, put it in his hat, and then it turned into a rabbit!'

'I'm sure that was just a trick, but it *does* makes me think!' replied Aviva.

'What do you mean?' asked Chava.

'Well, it makes me wonder about turning one thing into something else. The Alchemists used to try to find a way to turn lead into gold... Do you think it is really possible?'

'Well,' said Chava, 'there are two different things: tricks and something real. Tricks are like the conjuring trick we just saw, you could learn to that as well, but to really change one thing into another, like lead into gold, that's something else...'

Aviva nodded. 'I think you are probably right... Mind you, if you knew enough chemistry, maybe you could do that too. Or with an atom smasher...'

As they walked away towards the other booths in the fair Chava suddenly said: 'You know, I'm still thinking about that question'.

'Which question? About changing one thing into another?' said Aviva. 'I thought we need an atom smasher for that..'

'Yes, but I've been thinking a little more', replied Chava.

'Ok,' said Aviva, 'explain. What have you been thinking?'

'Well, you see, this week my teacher was telling us about the whole concept of Teshuva, Repentance, which is supposed to happen at this time of year, and especially on Yom Kippur. She told us that though Repentance you can really become like a different person...'

'Wow! Could I become like you?' said Aviva.

'You wouldn't want to,' said Chava. 'But you know what I mean. Like, I'm mad about eating sweets..'

'There's nothing wrong with that,' said Aviva. 'They're kosher.'

'But still not good for my teeth. Imagine if, this Yom Kippur, I just decided to stop', said Chava.

'Mmm.. sounds interesting. And what if I would decide to say the Shema every night before going to bed...' murmured Aviva, almost under her breath.

'That's right, we would be like two different people!' said Chava, laughing.

'In a way,' said Aviva. 'Like lead which turns into gold, using an atom smasher... I suppose, that's the real power of Yom Kippur!'

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