



## Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.**

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated.

Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

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Yom Kippur sermon, 1981.



Yom Kippur Sermon  
Daniel Jeremy Silver  
October 7, 1981

When we are deeply distressed or pushed beyond our limits, when the situation seems beyond our control or we desperately want a particular resolution to <sup>a</sup> ~~our~~ problem, it's ~~almost~~ natural for us to make a vow. We promise God or we promise ourselves that if only our soldier will come home safely from the wars, if only our child will be born healthy, if only our love will be requited, if only our mistake will be overlooked, if only the bad patch our business is going through can be gotten through, then we will give something that's important to us - our time or our substance - to God <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ to a good cause.

The Hebrew word for such a vow is neder. Because making such vows is an instinctive response to those situations where we are driven beyond the limits of our controls, they are often described in literature. The first such vow which our Scripture details involved Jacob. Jacob, you will recall, was the younger of twins. When his father was aged and blind, Jacob deluded Isaac and defrauded his brother of the birthright. He had to flee the understandable anger of Esau and he spent the first night of his flight in the wilderness, exposed to the elements, wild animals, bandits, a stray. The Torah tells us that when he woke up the next morning Jacob made a vow to God: "If only you will remain with me, protect me on my journey, if you will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and if I return safely to my father's house then you shall be my God. This stone, which I have set up a pillar, shall be God's house and a tenth of all that God will give me I will surely give to Him."

Today we do not make the vows that we make with the same kind of formal solemnity as our Fathers and do not treat them as sacred. The ancients invested their faith in the promise of God, ~~that~~ <sup>if</sup> they attended the shrine and obeyed His will, He would protect the land, cause the rains to come, allow them a good harvest and ultimately send them the deliverance, the messiah, for whom they longed. ~~They were~~ <sup>or want</sup> ~~certain that~~ God would not need to keep His word if they failed to keep theirs.



There needed to be a quid pro quo; their vows to God had to be paid up for God to make good on His promises. The vows, the resolutions, we make each December 31 are more often than not neglected or broken by the end of the first month of the new year; but it was not always so. When the ancients made a vow to God it was solemnly and ceremoniously made and it had to be repaid. In the book of Deuteronomy we find an Instruction from God which reflects the spirit of that age. "When you shall vow a vow to God, you shall not put off fulfilling it; for God will require it of you, and you will have acquired guilt." This paragraph is typical of that time. But then the Torah adds a peculiar and special Judaic element. "It shall not be accounted to you as a sin if you neglect making a vow." The sanctity of vows was assumed, but almost from the beginning of Jewish self-consciousness, our tradition discouraged the practice. Our leaders were concerned that when we are pushed or desperate we cease to speak rationally and make promises whose consequences we have not fully considered. It's our hearts, our need, rather than our mind and our reason which speaks, and we can make extravagant promises.

The Bible contains perhaps the most tragic, certainly the most dramatic, of all episodes which illustrate the danger of making ~~such~~ vows. In the twelfth century B.C.E. the Ammonites attacked the tribes. The Israelites turned to a seasoned commander, Jephthah, and asked him to command the defense of the land. Jephthah agreed. It was the custom in those days for a commander to make a vow to God or to his gods before he led his troops into battle; and Jephthah followed that custom. The Book of Judges reports his words: "I vow that if God gives me victory over the Ammonites and I return safe to my home the first thing that crosses the door of my house upon my safe return shall be a burnt offering unto God." The battle began. The armies of Israel were victorious. When Jephthah returned home the first thing that crossed the <sup>Threshold</sup> ~~door~~ of his house was his only child, a young daughter, who had heard the jingling of the harness as her father approached and ran out, excitedly, to meet him. The vow was paid.

Many vows are made without our being conscious of what the price may be.



I remember a colleague who told me of a youngster, an adolescent, whose father became deathly ill. As he paced the corridors of the hospital, praying that the doctors might be able to <sup>RETURN</sup> ~~turn~~ his father to health, he silently made a promise to God that if his father was cured he would devote his life to medicine. The father regained his health. The young man went to school each day, desperate to make good grades. He worked for one end to fulfill his vow, but he was only an average student and was not admitted to medical school, and in the end suffered a serious nervous breakdown.

Our tradition has tried to protect us from our more desperate acts. Rabbi Meir, <sup>AN</sup> ~~one of the~~ important Palestinian sages of the second century, is reported by the Talmud as saying: "Better for a man never to have vowed at all." Samuel, one of the famous rabbis of Babylon, taught: "Even if a man fulfills his vow he is to be considered as a sinner." A major tractate of the Talmud, that master work of rabbinic jurisprudence, is called Nedarim, Vows. <sup>As</sup> you leaf through it you discover that the major purpose of the book is to find legalistic ways, insofar as they can be found, to free men and women from the rash and excessive vows which they <sup>may</sup> have made. The rabbis could not ex cathedra exonerate everyone from their vows. They had to follow the Torah and the Torah <sup>mandated</sup> ~~said specifically~~ that if a vow was made it must be fulfilled. But they tried to <sup>disqualify</sup> ~~describe juridically~~ a whole series of promises as non-vows. If vows were made by minors or by people who could not be expected to know the consequences of what they said, they were declared to be null and void. Vows had to have a certain form. The rabbis developed a formula which is called hatarat nedarim, a formula for the release of vows, which in many cases could be used <sup>by those who were caught up in the words they had spoken, in desperation</sup> ~~by those who were caught up in the words they had spoken, in desperation~~ to release them from the burden which they had taken upon themselves.

The rabbis worked in this fashion for a number of good reasons. The first was theological. When all is said and done most of the vows that we make to God are little more than attempts to bribe God. They are our way of telling God: You will do this for me, I will do this for you. It goes back to the oriental practice



of bakshesh. You never appeared before the sheik or the sultan without a contribution in hand in order to make sure that he would be well disposed toward you. Now God's ways may be inscrutable, but certainly it is to demean God to assume that His attention, His blessing, can be bought.

Then, too, vows rashly made could have painful and destructive consequences. Even today when we no longer feel the overlay of solemnity and sacredness which the ancients associated with their vows, we can still be caught up in a stubborn pride which causes us to hold fast to words spoken in anger or in desperation, even though they cause us and others great hurt. Many a parent has come to me who has spoken angrily and told their child that if they don't break off a certain acquaintance, or stop doing what they were doing, they should never again darken their doorsteps. The words were spoken. The child had left. The parent sits hoping against hope for the phone to ring or the car to return, but there is only silence. Often, because of our vows, we have to eat humble pie, and there are many among us who are too proud and unbending to do so even though we desperately want to bind again the ties of family and of love ~~which are so basic and so precious to us.~~

I speak of vows and of the traditional Jewish attitude towards the nedarim because, as you recognize, this service is called Kol Nidre, "All Vows." The beautiful and moving melody which begins the service is called "All Vows." It would be logical to assume that this overture extolled the value of making vows, that we will correct our character flaws, after all, Yom Kippur is a day devoted to atonement, repentance, and contrition. Nothing would be more natural than that Yom Kippur's opening theme would underline the sanctity of vows and the importance of fulfilling and living up to the promises that we will make this day. Not so. Far from being an encouragement to fulfill our vows, the Kol Nidre is in fact a formula for the release of vows. Paradoxically, at the very beginning of our service, we ask God to release us of the resolutions and the vows which we will make during this Day of Atonement.

Why so?



The Kol Nidre is not a moving prayer or a noble piece of poetry or a psalm; rather, it is a legal formula using the repetitive language so typical of law, saying in its original form: "All the vows, bonds, oaths, obligations which I undertook between last Yom Kippur and this Yom Kippur I declare not to be binding. May they be considered null and void." It appears likely that people began to use this release of vows before the Yom Kippur service began at a time when it was literally believed that the Ten Days of Repentance were a time when each person was actually judged by a heavenly court. Rosh Hashanah was the day the court met. Yom Kippur was the day when the sentence was pronounced and the judgment was sealed. Apparently, no one wanted to go into the climactic session on Yom Kippur when they would make their final appeal to God for mercy, owing God one, to use the vernacular, not having paid God a debt which was owed to Him. They spoke this formula of release so that they might begin this day free of the guilt of not having paid to God what they had promised to God and so have a chance to be judged worthy of another year of life and of promise.

The custom began <sup>about</sup> a thousand years ago of beginning the Yom Kippur service with this formula of release among ordinary Jews. The Kol Nidre was not written in the great academies of the Geonim. Indeed, the religious leaders of the day opposed the practice but the people had their way and it became customary to speak the Kol Nidre just before the Yom Kippur service began. The Kol Nidre served a deep spiritual need and over the centuries its popularity was enhanced as it was set to great music and associated with the themes of martyrdom and loyalty. In various places at various times Jews who lived under the Imperial Church or the Imperial Mosque and who had been forced to convert under the threat of life or exile seem to have used the Kol Nidre in their secret worship on the holiest day of the year to free them from the guilt of their forced apostasy and to feel that they were truly Jews. They would come together surreptitiously, secretly, for a service on Yom Kippur and recite this formula of release and so say to themselves, we are still Jews and we want to be part of the Jewish people.



Early in the twelfth century a learned and influential rabbi, Rabbenu Tam, who was concerned that the Kol Nidre formula was far too broad, <sup>it</sup> released Jews from all vows when in point of fact there was no way that this could be done within the rabbinic frame of reference - changed the language of the Kol Nidre into the language which we now use. Originally the text had been a formula of release from all the vows, bonds, oaths, promises ~~that we~~ made between last Yom Kippur and this Yom Kippur. Rabbenu Tam's wording, the wording of the present prayerbook, is a formula of release from all the vows, bonds, oaths and obligations which we will make between this Yom Kippur and next Yom Kippur. Which is to say that we declare all the resolutions which we make tonight <sup>not binding</sup> even before we make them.

Why then Yom Kippur? Isn't Yom Kippur a time to make character-improvement vows? What were the sages trying to teach us by absolving us of our resolutions even before we made them?

The sages acceded to the Kol Nidre for two reasons. In the first instance the Kol Nidre should say to us: don't make vows. Why not? Vow-making is a discouraging enterprise. Many vows are too heavy for us. We can't live up to them. They will discourage us and ultimately stand in the way of our spiritual and moral growth. Most of our vows are 'never again' vows. As we sit here during the long hours of Yom kippur, listen to the music, speak the confession, feel the power, our mind reaches back over the year and we recognize how our anger has created distance between us and those we loved the most. We spoke before we thought. Bitter words crossed our lips. If we had taken the time we would have expressed ourselves otherwise and the ties of family and of friendship might not have ruptured. We focus on an incident and a concern and say to ourselves: 'never again'; but there are few emotional disciplines which any of us can with certainty promise never again to violate. However tightly we discipline ourselves, for however long we bridle our tongue, there will come a moment when feeling wells up, when the old way gets the better of us and the words spill out. Those who are by instinct physical cannot



always restrain themselves from lashing out. Those whose thoughts are self-centered will not always be courteous. Those who are by nature ambitious cannot always suppress their drive. Those who are lethargic cannot always be decisive. There are times when we can adopt a discipline and never again fall from grace; but far more frequently, never again promises are too much for us.

The problem is that when we vow never again and fail and make another 'never again' vow and fail again ultimately we become discouraged and cease trying. We can see this in the little things, the things that are really too trivial for Yom Kippur, but which, in a sense, become the metaphor for the more serious concerns of this day. We've tried to give up smoking or drinking or eating too much. We say, never again. Six months later we begin again. We promise ourselves, never again, and three months later we fall from grace. Ultimately, we cease making the promise at all. It's too discouraging. Our repeated failures force us to admit what we don't want to admit - our weakness and inconstancy. The thrust of Yom Kippur is to make possible improvement, not to suppress that which is human in us. Man is not by nature angelic and cannot live angelically. Yom Kippur speaks of growth, of taking the next step. Yom Kippur teaches that one mitzvah leads to another. It does not ask us to become instant saints. <sup>Yom Kippur does not encourage us to</sup> make resolutions which in all likelihood are beyond our ability to abide. Think tonight about doing your best, about living up to your highest aspirations, but don't vow what you cannot abide.

I think the rabbis allowed the Kol Nidre to stand at the beginning of our service for another reason: to remind us not to focus the concerns of these twenty-four hours too narrowly. Over Yom Kippur everyone of us who gets caught up in the service reviews his life. Each of us has some special concern. Some of us can't pull ourselves together. We're unable to make up our minds and so we spend these twenty-four hours thinking about being indecisive, screwing up our courage to go out and make the decisions which ought to be made. But you know, plugging the one hole in the dam through which water is trickling is a useless enterprise if the whole dam face is weak and in danger of disintegrating.



In point of fact, most of the specific incidents on which we dwell and most of the specific character flaws that concern us tonight cannot be overcome unless we change the whole context of our lives. I had a mother come to me some months ago, complaining that she often spoke intemperately to her children. She always regretted it. She said: "They get under my skin, I can't stop myself, I know I shouldn't do it, I say too much and immediately regret what I say, but I do it anyway. How can I overcome this tendency to let go on my children?" We began to talk and as we talked we discovered, she and I, that an only child, she'd always gotten her way with temper tantrums. Temper was an emotion whose practical value she had been conditioned to accept. We discovered that she had not developed other interests outside of her children so they meant everything to her. She had no other release and when the least thing went wrong there was nothing to balance out her emotional concerns. We discovered that she was inordinately concerned about her marriage. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with it, but so many of her friends were having trouble, were being divorced, and she was afraid that if she failed her major role as a mother this might happen to her. We discovered that she had a very difficult relationship with her mother. She couldn't say to her mother what she felt, and so she said to her children what she really meant to say to her mother. And on and on and on.

I'm suggesting through this one instance that if we concentrate only on a particular failing or incident, do what we normally do on Yom Kippur, if we dwell on the failing which has caused us the greatest pain, we'll fail to tap Yom Kippur's real potential. Yom Kippur's purpose is not to help us devise a technique to deal with a particular failing or a single addiction. Yom Kippur's goal is to help us reposition our whole lives, to make us look hard at all aspects of our character, to make us consider whether we are making it possible for the divine potential within us to unfold.

Have you ever noticed how the Viddui, the confession is written? Each line of



the confessional is specific. It lists a whole alphabet of sins and failings of which all of us are in some way guilty. For the sins which we have sinned against Thee by abuse of power, by the profanation of Thy name, by speaking disrespectfully to parents and teachers, by taking advantage of others and on and on and on, a whole litany of sins. Compare this with the definition of repentance in the liturgy. When it comes to the other side of the equation, what it is that we are to become, the words are general: to purify our hearts that we can worship Thee in truth; to align ourselves again to God, to do the good. The goal of teshuvah, repentance, the goal of Yom Kippur, is not to improve a single aspect of our lives or to resolve a single problem but to reposition our whole life. The goal of Yom Kippur is not to encourage you to make a vow feeling that once you overcome a single failing it will never happen again. Character doesn't develop that way. The goal of Yom Kippur is to make you see your own nobility, the fullness of your possibility, that bit of God which is within you and how, by taking a step here, showing concern there, offering yourself to another to love, by setting higher goals for yourself, by being more disciplined all the way across the board and, most of all, by having a nobler and more divine perspective of what your life may be, by obeying God's Instructions, you'll be able to restructure your life during the next year so that the failings which are so burdensome to you now, the memories about which you are unhappiest about tonight and will think about tomorrow, will not recur - not because you have gone after them directly, made a vow 'never again', but because you've seen yourself as God sees you, as a sinner, as one who could do better, as someone created in His own image. We speak of sin. Sin is the measure of the difference between what you are and what you might be; of what you are and what you can still be. It's a measure of your spiritual and moral potential.

Tonight it's not the vow that we seek, it's the tear, a tear for the person we might have been, can yet be, if only the spirit of Yom Kippur can envelope us, if we'll only look at the whole pattern and direction of our life. Forget the specific vows. Forget the resolutions. Understand the reason for the Kol Nidre. Concentrate on the whole - on the direction and purpose of your life.



It is said that on a particular erev Yom Kippur the great Hasidic master, Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, stood outside his door early in the afternoon preparing himself spiritiually for the Yom Kippur service. A tailor passed along the street looking for some business. "Have you anything to mend?" "Anything to mend?" Levi Yitzhak began to cry. A disciple who was standing nearby was puzzled. "My master, why are you crying?" "My soul needs mending and there is no <sup>one who can</sup> tailor to do it for me." That's the concern that all of us face during these next hours. Can we mend our souls? Can we recover the wholeness of our persons? Can we turn to the way that will enlarge the possibility the new year offers to us? No resolutions. A tear. No vows, but clearer understanding. No resolutions but a whole-hearted return.





C1st Draft 2

Yom Kippur Sermon  
Daniel Jeremy Silver  
October 7, 1981

When we are deeply distressed, <sup>OR</sup> ~~we are~~ pushed beyond our limits,  
when the situation seems beyond our control, <sup>OR</sup> ~~when~~ we desperately want <sup>A particular</sup> ~~certain~~  
<sup>Resolution to our problems</sup> ~~solution, a certain end~~, it's almost natural, <sup>FOR</sup> ~~certainly instinctive~~ to us, to make  
a vow, <sup>We</sup> ~~to~~ promise God, <sup>OR US</sup> ~~to~~ promise ourselves that if only our soldier will come  
home safely from the wars, if only our child will be born healthy, if only our  
love will be requited, if only our mistake will be overlooked, if only the bad <sup>path</sup> ~~path~~  
<sup>we will give</sup> ~~that~~ our business is going through can be gotten through, then something  
that's important to us, <sup>On Time in and out of</sup> ~~part of our lives, part of ourselves~~, will be devoted to  
God and to a good cause. Now the Hebrew word for such a vow is neder. <sup>because</sup>  
<sup>Making such vows is</sup> ~~it's~~ such an instinctive, ~~natural~~ response to those situations where we  
are driven beyond the limits of our controls, <sup>They are</sup> ~~obviously~~ and often <sup>described</sup> ~~docu-~~  
<sup>MENTED</sup> ~~mented~~ in Scripture. The <sup>EARLIEST</sup> ~~earliest~~ of these vows, <sup>of which</sup> our Scripture tells us  
<sup>INVOLVED</sup> ~~is one spoken~~ by a young Jacob. Jacob, you will recall, was the younger of twins,  
and when his father was <sup>AGED</sup> ~~aging~~ and blind, <sup>Jacob</sup> ~~he~~ deluded his father and defrauded his  
brother of the birthright, ~~the entire portion of the legacy, the control of clan~~  
~~which belonged by tribal custom to the elder and, of course, he had to flee his~~  
<sup>ANGER OF HIS</sup> ~~brother Esau and so he stealthily left the on~~ and he spent the first night <sup>at</sup>  
<sup>his flight</sup> ~~out~~ in the wilderness, exposed to the elements, the wild animals, bandits, ~~that~~  
stray. The <sup>Bank</sup> ~~Bible~~ tells us that when he woke up the next morning Jacob made a  
vow to God. He told God, <sup>in effect</sup> ~~in effect~~, if only you will remain with me, protect me  
on my journey, if you will give me bread to eat and ~~if you will give me~~ clothing  
to wear, and if I return safe, to my father's house then you shall be my God. <sup>They</sup> ~~I will~~  
<sup>STAND WHICH I HAVE SET</sup> ~~raise up a pillar here which will~~ be God's <sup>place</sup> ~~place~~ and a tenth of all that God  
will give me, ~~a tithe~~ <sup>SURELY GIVE</sup> I will devote to Him.

<sup>MAKE</sup> Now, today we do not ~~treat~~ the vows that we make <sup>with</sup> the same kind of  
<sup>AND DO NOT TREAT THEM AS</sup> ~~solemnity, the same sense of the sacred in which they were treated in ancient~~  
~~times~~. The ancients needed to trust the word of God, <sup>UPON</sup> ~~God's~~ promise that if they



But God would not keep his word, if they failed to keep theirs. (First Draft)

attended the shrine and obeyed His will He would protect the land, ~~and~~ cause the rains to come <sup>allow</sup> ~~and give~~ them a good harvest and ultimately send them the deliverance, the messiah, for whom they longed. <sup>There is a reason for this</sup> ~~And so because~~ there needed to be a quid pro quo, their ~~own word~~ <sup>vows</sup> ~~their own pledge~~ to God had to be trusted, <sup>the ancient</sup> and when they made a vow to God it was solemnly ~~made~~ and ceremoniously made and it had to be repaid. With us the vows ~~which we make~~, the resolutions which we make each December 31 are more often than not neglected, ~~forgotten~~, or broken by the end of the first month of the new year. But it was not always so. In the Torah, in the book of Deuteronomy, we have <sup>find</sup> an instruction from God which reflects the spirit of that age. When you shall vow a vow to God, you shall not put off fulfilling it for God will require it of you and you will have acquired guilt. But then this paragraph so typical of that time <sup>old</sup> ~~and era~~ has a peculiar and very special Judaic <sup>element</sup> ~~Isaiahite~~ addition. It shall not be accounted to you as a sin if you neglect, ~~if you avoid~~, making a vow. The sanctity of vows was assumed, but almost from the beginning of Jewish consciousness our leaders were concerned by ~~this tendency~~ that we have when we are pushed, <sup>we are</sup> ~~when we are~~ desperate, to speak rationally, to speak ~~extravagantly~~, to make promises that we cannot fulfill, <sup>on</sup> ~~to make~~ promises whose consequences we are not fully <sup>have</sup> ~~conscious of when we make them~~ <sup>considered</sup> because it's our hearts, our need, rather than our mind and our reason which speaks. <sup>And the Bible</sup> ~~And the Bible~~ contains perhaps the most tragic, certainly the most dramatic, of all illustrations <sup>which illustrate</sup> ~~from antiquity~~ about the danger of making such vows.

In the twelfth century B.C.E. a ~~neighboring group of peoples~~, the Ammonites, attacked the tribes. They ~~began to ravage the land~~, and the Israelites tried to turn to a ~~certain~~ seasoned commander by the name of Jephtha and they asked Jephtha to command the defense of the <sup>land</sup> ~~community~~ and Jephtha agreed. ~~And it was the~~ custom in those days for a commander ~~before he led out his troops~~ to make a vow to God or to his gods and Jephtha followed that custom. <sup>He is recorded to have said</sup> ~~And he said~~, in effect, I vow to <sup>God</sup> ~~God~~ that if He gives me victory over the Ammonites and I return safe to my home the first <sup>thing</sup> ~~time~~ that crosses the door of my house upon my safe return ~~to my home~~



shall be a burnt offering unto God. <sup>And he</sup> ~~And he~~ went out, the armies of Israel were victorious, <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ when he returned the first thing that crossed the door of his house was his only child, a young daughter who had heard the jingling of the harness as her father approached and ran out, excitedly, to meet him. The vow was paid.

Now, many vows are made in ~~just such a way~~ without our being conscious, ~~really~~, of what the price may be. I remember a colleague who told me of a young <sup>man</sup> ~~man~~ who was <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ his early adolescence whose father became deathly ill, ~~and~~ as he paced the corridors of the hospital, <sup>hoping</sup> ~~hoping~~ that the doctors might be able to turn his father to health, he silently made a promise to God that if his father <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>became</sup> ~~became~~ healthy again he would devote his life to medicine ~~and~~ the father was healed and the young man went to school each day, desperate to make good grades. He worked for one end to fulfill his vow, but he was only an average student and was not able <sup>admitted</sup> ~~able~~ to enter medical school and ~~he~~ suffered, ultimately, a nervous breakdown.

~~From the very beginning~~ <sup>has</sup> I said our tradition tried to protect us ~~from~~ <sup>ourselves</sup>, from our more desperate emotions, <sup>so</sup> ~~so~~ we read of Rabbi Meir, one of the <sup>important</sup> Palestinian tannaim of the second century, who <sup>says</sup> ~~says~~, better for a man never to have vowed at all. <sup>One</sup> ~~One~~ of the great early Talmudists of Babylon, a man <sup>named</sup> ~~named~~ Samuels, <sup>said</sup> ~~said~~, even if a man fulfills his vow he is to be considered as a sinner. And ~~one~~ of the major tractates of the Talmud, that great master work of rabbinic Jewish jurisprudence, it's called the <sup>Nedarim</sup> ~~Nedarim~~ vows. <sup>IF YOU</sup> ~~It's interesting to~~ leaf through it ~~because~~ you discover very quickly that the whole purpose of the book is to find ways insofar as they can be found, legalistic ways, to free men and women from the <sup>dash and</sup> ~~exclusive~~ vows which they have made. The rabbis could not ~~simply~~ ex cathedra exhonorate anyone and everyone from the <sup>their</sup> ~~vows that they had made~~ because they had to follow the Torah, and the Torah <sup>saying</sup> ~~said~~ that if a vow was made it must be fulfilled. But they tried juridically to <sup>discur</sup> ~~declare~~ that a whole series of vows ~~were~~ not in fact



vows if they didn't have that certain form. Certain vows, if they were made by minors or by people who could not be expected to know the consequences of what they said, <sup>vows had to have a certain form, no ambiguity</sup> these were also declared to be null and void. And ~~they~~ <sup>T. NEDELMAN</sup> developed a formula which is called hatarach ~~darim~~, <sup>procured by release</sup> a formula for the release of vows, which ~~was an attempt~~ to help those who were caught up in the words they had spoken in desperation, ~~to help them, to free them~~ from the burden which they had taken up on themselves.

<sup>acted at the Prikeon Pen</sup> Now, the rabbis ~~had~~ a number of good reasons ~~to do this~~. The first was theological. When all is said and done most of the vows that we make to God <sup>little more than</sup> are simply attempts to bribe God. They are <sup>a way of telling God</sup> attempts to say if only You will do this for me I will do <sup>the</sup> that for you. It goes back to the <sup>oriental practice of</sup> medieval form of ~~baksish~~, <sup>baksish</sup> where you never appeared before the sheik or before the sultan without a contribution in your hand in order to make sure that he would be <sup>well disposed</sup> ~~willing and able to~~ listen to you, ~~well intentioned~~ toward you. Now, God's ways may be inscrutable but certainly it is to demean God to assume that His attention, His blessing can be bought. <sup>the other</sup> And even though today we no longer feel ~~that the take~~, the overlay of solemnity and sacredness which was associated by the ancients with <sup>then</sup> the vows, we can still <sup>be caught up in a</sup> ~~sense the~~ stubborn pride which causes many of us to hold on to the words which we have spoken in anger or in desperation even though they cause us and others great hurt.

How many times a parent has come to me, a parent who has spoken angrily and ~~rational~~ <sup>to the child</sup> to a youngster and told ~~them~~ that if they don't break off a certain acquaintance, <sup>on stop going about their wrong doings</sup> if they don't grow up and put aside the folly of their youth, <sup>they were</sup> if they don't accept the responsibilities which they ought to, they're never to darken their doorsteps again. The words <sup>were</sup> have been spoken. The child is <sup>left</sup> turned away and the parent sits desperately waiting for the ~~doorbell to ring~~, for the phone to ring, <sup>on no can't return</sup> for the child to return but there is only silence. Often, because of our vows, we have to eat humble pie, and there are many among us who are too proud, <sup>and</sup> ~~unwilling~~, unbending, to eat <sup>do it</sup> the humble pie even though we des-



ORDINARY RULE NOT IN NO SHORT HAND AND NO ✓  
THE BEONIN, 14000, NO NOUGHER LONDON LIP  
ORIGINALY OFFERED NO PRACTICE [First Draft]

perately want to bind again the ties of family and ~~the ties~~ of love which are  
so basic and so precious to us.

~~Now~~ I speak of of vows and of the traditional ~~rabbinic~~ and Jewish  
attitude towards the ~~darim~~ because, as you recognize, this service is called Kol  
Nidre, all vows, the ~~very~~ beautiful moving moment which begins the service, speaks  
the vows, and one would assume ~~almost instinctively~~ that a day devoted to atone-

ment, ~~to~~ repentance, to contrition, whose opening theme is all the vows, Kol Nidre,  
would find that that opening theme would speak of the sanctity of vows, of the

importance of ~~following out~~, of living up to, of ~~fulfilling~~ the promises that we  
make. But it's interesting, and perhaps more than that paradoxical, to recognize

that the Kol Nidre, far from being an encouragement to us to fulfill our vows, was  
quite the reverse. It is in its historic origin an Aramaic formula devised long

ago as one of these formulas for release of vows. At the very beginning of our ser-  
vice we ask God to release us of the resolutions, of the vows which we might make  
during this day of atonement and contrition and repentance.

About a thousand years ago from a place we know not where but certainly  
not because rabbis and sages decided upon it, the custom developed in Israel of  
beginning the Yom Kippur service, ~~originally~~ the Kol Nidre was spoken just before  
the service began, to ~~begin~~ this day of atonement with the speaking of not what  
is a great prayer, not a noble piece of poetry or a psalm, but a legal formula

which in its original form said ~~very simply~~ in that kind of repetitive language  
which is juridic; all the vows, bonds, oaths, obligations which I undertook be-  
tween last Yom Kippur and this Yom Kippur I declare ~~then~~ not to be binding, may  
they be considered null and void. Now, the origin of the custom of having this  
formula for the release of vows as the very first statement of Yom Kippur goes

back to a time when the theme of the ten days of repentance of Rosh Hashanah and  
Yom Kippur as ~~being~~ a time of judgment was taken seriously. Rosh Hashanah was a  
The day of judgment, Yom Kippur was the day when the judgment was sealed; and no one



apparently wanted to go into this <sup>CLIMATIC SESSION</sup> final moment when they <sup>W</sup> could make their <sup>FINAL APPEAL</sup> case before God, ~~appeal to God~~ for His mercy, owing God one, to use the vernacular, "not having paid God a debt which was owed to Him, so essentially they pronounced this formula of release that they might <sup>WAS SPOKEN FOR</sup> enter <sup>BEFORE THE COURT</sup> tonight free of the <sup>GUILT</sup> sense of not having paid to God what they had promised to God, <sup>AND SO HAVE A CHANCE TO</sup> that they might be judged worthy of another year of life and of promise.

<sup>DO NOT NEED TO BECOME POPULAR ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO</sup>  
Over the years the original leaders of our people fought against this <sup>WAS SPOKEN FOR</sup> broad use of the release from vows at this time. It became popular, great music was associated with it, and associated also with the themes of martyrdom and loyalty because in various places at various times <sup>AND</sup> those Jews who lived under the imperial church or the imperial mosque who had been forced to convert under the threat of life, exile or conversion, these people on the holiest day of the year <sup>SOON TO HAVE USED DO NOT NEED TO</sup> were drawn back to their ancestral faith. They would often come together surreptitiously, secretly, for a service on Yom Kippur and they recited this formula of release to release them from the vows through which they had undertaken another faith and to say we are still Jews and we want to participate with the Jewish people.

<sup>RABBENU TAM</sup>  
And then early in the twelfth century a European <sup>WHO WAS</sup> rabbi, a French rabbi by the name of Rabbenu Tam, concerned by the fact that the formula was far too broad, it released Jews from all vows when in point of fact there was no way that <sup>THE COULD BE DONE WITHIN THE RABBINICAL FRAME OF RESPONSIBILITY</sup> the rabbis had discovered for such a broad release from their obligations and they changed the language of the Kol Nidre into the language which we now use.

<sup>NO THAT</sup>  
It had originally been <sup>A FORMULA OF RELEASE</sup> from all the vows, bonds, oaths, promises that we made between last Yom Kippur and this Yom Kippur. Rabbenu Tam's wording, the wording of the present prayerbook, is from all the vows, bonds, oaths and obligations which we make between this Yom Kippur and next Yom Kippur, which is to say, all the resolutions which we make tonight <sup>NOT</sup> and we declare even before we make them, that they are not obligatory, they don't rest upon us as an obligation which we must fulfill.



What else is it you KIPPUR but the time  
to make character related resolutions -  
7 VOWS? [First Draft]

Why then Yom Kippur? Why then this whole process of contrition, of  
confession? What was it that allowed or encouraged the rabbis to leave the Kol  
Nidre as the first statement of worship? What were they <sup>sages</sup> trying to teach us<sup>2</sup> and  
~~suggest to us?~~

I think two things. In the first instance I think they were saying to  
~~us that vows are too heavy for you, you can't live up to them, they will discourage~~  
~~you, they will stand in the way of the continuing spiritual moral growth which Jew-~~  
~~ish life, which the Torah way, which Yom Kippur is all about.~~ Most of our vows  
are 'never again vows.' As we sit here during the twenty-four hours of Yom Kip-  
pur, listen to the music, speak the confession, our mind <sup>recalls</sup> races back over the year  
and we recognize how <sup>our</sup> anger has <sup>crystallized</sup> stood in the way, as distance from those we loved  
the most. We spoke before we thought. Bitter words crossed our lips. If we had  
taken the time we would have expressed ourselves otherwise and the ties of family  
and of friendship might not have been ruptured. And we say to ourselves, never  
again, but there are very few emotional disciplines which any of us can with cer-  
tainty promise ourselves <sup>Never to violate</sup> ~~never again~~ <sup>for</sup> however tightly we discipline ourselves,  
for however long we bridle our tongue, there will come a moment when the emotion  
wells up, when the old way gets the better of us and the words will spill out.

Those who are by instinct physical cannot always restrain themselves from the  
~~physical outlet which they traditionally require.~~ Those whose <sup>Thoughts and self control</sup> acts are impulsive

will not always be courteous. Those who are by nature ambitious cannot always  
~~suppress that ambition and be concerned with the unselfish act.~~ Now, there are  
times when we can in fact put ourselves in the position where never again will  
~~we do this or that, but, for the most part, never again is too much for us.~~ And  
when we promise and vow never again and fail and make a promise ~~another year~~ and  
fail again ultimately we become discouraged and ~~will~~ <sup>can</sup> cease even to try. We see  
this in the little things, the things that are really too trivial for Yom Kippur  
~~for they,~~ in a sense, become the metaphor for the more serious ~~sins.~~ <sup>concerns of this day</sup> We've tried



to give up smoking or eating too much or drinking too much, we say, never again.

Six months later we begin again and then we promise ourselves, never again, and

three months later we begin again and, ultimately, we cease making the promise to

ourselves. The whole burden of this night is not to suppress that which is human

in us so completely that we become in a sense angels because man is not by nature

angelic. Tonight speaks of growth, of taking the next step, of not making resolu-

tions which are beyond the ability of the human being to achieve. Promise yourself

tonight to try the best you can, but don't make your vow, a vow which you will

never live up to.

In the second instance, I think, the rabbis left the Kol Nidre at the

beginning of our service because it has a way of focusing the concerns of these

twenty-four hours too narrowly. Each of us reviews his own life. Each of us has

his own very special concerns. For some of us we simply can't pull ourselves to-

gether, we're unable to make decisions, and so we spend these twenty-four hours

thinking about being indecisive, screwing up our courage to go out and make the

decisions which ought to be made. But you know, plugging the hole in the dam, the

one hole through which water is trickling through is a useless enterprise if the

whole face of the dam is weak, and if during next year any number of holes will

appear and any number of trickles will come down the face of the dam can't hold

back the water that is behind it. In point of fact, most of the things, the very

specific things that concern us tonight, cannot be resolved, overcome, unless we

change the whole context of our lives.

(I had a mother come to me some months ago, complaining of the fact

that she spoke often and intemperately to her children. She always regretted it,

but she said, they get under my skin, I can't stop myself, I know I shouldn't do

it, I say too much, but I do it anyway, how can I overcome this tendency to let

go on my children? We began to talk and as we talked we discovered, she and I,

that she was an only child, that she'd always gotten her way with temper tantrums.



ON EMOTIONAL VALUE HAD BEEN  
Temper was something which had been encouraged, conditioned into her. We discovered that she had not through ~~her adult~~ life developed other interests outside of her children so they meant everything to her, she had no release, and when the least thing went wrong there was nothing to balance out her emotional concerns. We discovered that she was inordinately concerned about her marriage, not that there was anything fundamentally wrong with it, but so many of her friends were having trouble, were being divorced, and she was afraid that this might happen to her, and she'd be cast adrift unprepared for another world and all this tension was coming out. We discovered that she had a relationship with her mother which was a very difficult one and she couldn't say to her mother what she felt, and so she said to her children what she really meant to say to her mother, and on and on and on.

Now what I'm suggesting through this one instance is that if we concentrate only on that particular failing, weakness on our part, which we've tended to dwell on tonight and will think about tomorrow because it's caused us the greatest pain, we'll fail to understand the secret, the power, the potential of Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is not in devising a technique to deal with a particular single failing, a single addiction, but it's in repositioning our whole lives, making us look at the way in which all aspects of our character can be taken in hand, in which the unfolding of the divinity within us can in fact take place. As we repeat it together tonight, the confession, the Vidui, I hope you notice something interesting in the way the liturgy is written. The confessional is specific. It lists a whole conjuring and litany of sins, of failings of which all of us are in some way guilty. For the sins which we have sinned against Thee by abuse of power, by the profanation of Thy name, by speaking disrespectfully to parents and teachers, by taking advantage of others and on and on and on, a whole alphabet of sins. But when it came to the other side of the equation, to the goal, what it is we want to become the words were very general, "to purify our hearts that we can worship Thee in truth; to align ourselves again to God to do the good. The goal of Teshuvah, the goal of



the repentance, the goal of Yom Kippur, is not simply to ~~take one problem~~ and to resolve ~~that problem~~ but to take a ~~look at~~ your whole life. For what is a sin? A sin is the measure of the difference between what you are and what you might be ~~and what you can still be~~. It's a measure of your ~~potential~~, spiritual and moral potential. The goal of Yom Kippur is not to ~~help you~~ overcome a single failing and to make a vow that it will never happen again. ~~It won't work that way. It's to~~ make you see your own nobility, the fullness of your possibility, that bit of God which is within you and how, by taking a step here, showing concern there, offering yourself to love here, by setting higher goals for yourself, by being more disciplined all the way across the board, by having a nobler perspective, a more divine perspective of what your life may be you'll be able to restructure your life during the next year so that the failings which are so burdensome to your now, the memories about which you are unhappiest tonight, you will think about tomorrow ~~so that these~~ will not recur not because you've gone after them directly, made a vow 'never again' but because you've seen yourself as God sees you, not simply as sinner, but as some created in His own image. Tonight ~~we look~~ not to the sin but to the soul. Tonight it's not the vow that we seek, it's the tear, the tear for the person that we might have been, can yet be, if only the spirit of Yom Kippur can envelope us, if we'll only look far more broadly than we tend to look. Forget the vows. Forget the resolutions. Forget the specific. See yourself more nobly, more fully, as God sees you.

It is said that on ~~erev~~ Yom Kippur the great Hasidic master, Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, was standing outside his door early in the afternoon preparing himself emotionally and spiritually for the Yom Kippur day and a tailor passed through the street looking for some business. Have you anything to mend, have you anything to mend? And suddenly Levi Yitzhak began to cry and his disciple who was standing inside said, my master, why are you crying? My soul needs mending. That's the concern that all of us face tonight during these next hours,

AND THERE WAS NO TAILOR TO DO IT FOR US



[First Draft] ✓

11

CAN WE

CAN WE RECOVER

CAN WE RETURN TO HOW WE WERE

to mend our souls, to mend the wholeness of our person, to see the possibility the

new year offers to each of us. No resolutions, a tear. No vows, a new way of

UNDOING IT ALL  
looking at yourself.









bread to eat, clothing to wear - & if I return  
safe to my father's home, all that shall be my  
law, ~~for I have not~~ I have not as much power  
shall be to be. ~~where~~, & if all that God gives I  
shall give God a Tithe.

[illegible]

When you stand near a man to God, you  
shall not put off judging it, for God  
will require it of you - & you must  
have a prepared heart.

But can be Total Distance between miles to - some  
total 20 miles less to be as much you are 7.6 -

[illegible]

When are you can not go with, to  
you not from from coming



The ~~quantity~~ you is united -- ~~but~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~please~~ add  
 Read it to make one phase as indicated - but  
 the Bible is not yet ruled consistent about it  
 try to avoid rules and phases

Indeed, the Rules contain a lot of things  
 perhaps the most clear of all the united part of  
 the united days of united - - and it is not  
 the committee united the united united - it  
united united asked a united united united  
 to united united - the united - united  
 the united of the united to rule  
 a united is a united of united united -  
 The united united united

If you believe the Committee and  
 my husband the volunteer have found  
 a way out of the mess  
 and if my husband to meet me on  
 my own return shall be the best - &  
 shall be offered by me as a secret

after -  
 when he was born from a ~~man~~ - the first day he  
 lived with the ~~man~~ of his name - men he was called -  
 a very dear man

may have one ~~fine~~ <sup>rule</sup> ~~rule~~ <sup>rule</sup> pressure - 1 of the  
mullet ~~corresponds to~~ <sup>is</sup> parallel  
consequence - same are well  
rods - brandy used are found











included 2 uncut for Carl K.K. to Carl T.K. -  
May they no longer be secured by day - let  
them be worked well & used

then the K.N. became the agency of the K.K. since various  
schedules of copying - it is of papers and substance  
origin - The letter of the 7-10-2 cut generally appeared -  
I refer to it as a union of some other kind - it  
seemingly to have been spoken before the K.K.  
never actually began - & it possibly was some  
single - new from which were already described covered  
here the new must have been published by  
and - a new edit about unfulfilled year  
unfulfilled edit longer can be made -



in time the K.N. came to some refined alter one  
preferred them - including all of present future -

It may have been spoke of the American - the first  
forced to make year of system on concern of other  
all the interest of the year  
will and any more to feel and again of the  
improving of found - it was then very of other in  
view of concern with not will decreased -

Enter in new religion  
But of the new religion is decreased -

generally  
showed - - but let be at the K.N. to meet  
it - - a decreased of removal of year - 1 partially  
all to find the K.N. had also the best new to



was legal (under) law - to ~~European~~ ~~subject~~  
(Tam) ~~change~~ ~~the~~ ~~text~~ ~~to~~ ~~read~~

like a man, but, well, no. ~~under~~  
2 my rule caravan ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~1~~ ~~with~~ ~~fill~~  
my ~~leg~~ ~~not~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~deared~~ <sup>BINDING</sup> - my ~~leg~~  
be ~~considered~~ ~~needed~~ ~~to~~ ~~read~~

Tam ~~change~~ ~~the~~ ~~text~~ - accepted ~~to~~ ~~K.N.~~ ~~as~~ ~~to~~ ~~find~~ ~~the~~  
~~as~~ ~~a~~ ~~dear~~  
~~4/14-15~~ ~~and~~ ~~presented~~ ~~in~~ ~~accord~~ ~~to~~ ~~presenting~~ ~~in~~ ~~accord~~  
~~might~~ ~~not~~ ~~be~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~repeated~~ ~~repeated~~ ~~repeated~~  
from Y.H. ~~1~~ ~~denied~~ ~~to~~ ~~find~~ ~~spirit~~ - ~~at~~ ~~first~~  
leave ~~the~~ ~~K.N.~~ ~~left~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~sign~~ - ~~my~~  
voice ~~in~~ ~~presence~~ ~~of~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~  
being ~~to~~ ~~not~~ ~~at~~ ~~home~~ - ~~as~~ ~~to~~ ~~participate~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~  
Y.H. ~~spirit~~ ~~of~~ ~~Confession~~ - ~~2~~ ~~deared~~ ~~and~~ ~~legis~~  
~~2~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~that~~ ~~they~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~ending~~

2 am quit of my revelation ~~and~~ ~~legis~~ ~~and~~ ~~can~~  
If ~~not~~ ~~what~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~purpose~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ?

One could reason ~~that~~ ~~since~~ ~~the~~ ~~corrected~~ ~~feeling~~  
of a ~~man~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~mode~~ ~~under~~ ~~presence~~ - ~~1~~ ~~can~~ ~~that~~  
it ~~best~~ ~~is~~ ~~see~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~in~~ ~~place~~ - ~~at~~ ~~least~~ ~~in~~ ~~presence~~ -  
~~the~~ ~~K.N.~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~to~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~is~~ ~~4~~  
a ~~series~~ ~~of~~ ~~just~~ ~~under~~ ~~see~~ ~~just~~ ~~to~~ ~~see~~ ~~up~~ ~~to~~  
~~see~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~ ~~revelation~~







wanted to be <sup>not</sup> to be ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~experience~~ <sup>experience</sup>  
 unless ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~please~~ <sup>please</sup> - "2 ~~at~~ <sup>could</sup> ~~last~~ <sup>last</sup> ~~year~~ <sup>year</sup> to  
 meet 2 and - so ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~again~~ <sup>again</sup> -

There ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~will~~ <sup>are</sup> I believe only two - ~~seen~~  
found ~~the~~ release of voice ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> Y. H. ~~series~~ - ~~voice~~  
laid to ~~the~~ harmonies - 7 ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>to</sup> recap

2' la nuova griglia a quattro

I'd always needed the little

2<sup>nd</sup> report of many users

I'm sure you noticed that when ~~discovered~~ last - 10

visited - several others [unclear] - [unclear] a  
more reported of [unclear] created I -

for the year ended 31st March 1954

yes & instead of ~~much~~

by about 7 percent

by the not under 34 in under

to down part of front, under

by the ~~presence~~, ~~causing~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~source~~

on night

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Time Group - one of the ~~same~~ <sup>same</sup> ~~need~~ <sup>need</sup> ~~pp~~ <sup>pp</sup> ~~cor~~ <sup>cor</sup> ~~1~~ <sup>1</sup> ~~2~~ <sup>2</sup> ~~3~~ <sup>3</sup> ~~4~~ <sup>4</sup> ~~5~~ <sup>5</sup> ~~6~~ <sup>6</sup> ~~7~~ <sup>7</sup> ~~8~~ <sup>8</sup> ~~9~~ <sup>9</sup> ~~10~~ <sup>10</sup> ~~11~~ <sup>11</sup> ~~12~~ <sup>12</sup> ~~13~~ <sup>13</sup> ~~14~~ <sup>14</sup> ~~15~~ <sup>15</sup> ~~16~~ <sup>16</sup> ~~17~~ <sup>17</sup> ~~18~~ <sup>18</sup> ~~19~~ <sup>19</sup> ~~20~~ <sup>20</sup> ~~21~~ <sup>21</sup> ~~22~~ <sup>22</sup> ~~23~~ <sup>23</sup> ~~24~~ <sup>24</sup> ~~25~~ <sup>25</sup> ~~26~~ <sup>26</sup> ~~27~~ <sup>27</sup> ~~28~~ <sup>28</sup> ~~29~~ <sup>29</sup> ~~30~~ <sup>30</sup> ~~31~~ <sup>31</sup> ~~32~~ <sup>32</sup> ~~33~~ <sup>33</sup> ~~34~~ <sup>34</sup> ~~35~~ <sup>35</sup> ~~36~~ <sup>36</sup> ~~37~~ <sup>37</sup> ~~38~~ <sup>38</sup> ~~39~~ <sup>39</sup> ~~40~~ <sup>40</sup> ~~41~~ <sup>41</sup> ~~42~~ <sup>42</sup> ~~43~~ 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Prayer all heart that we may see you a little - The

~~The 4th~~      ~~deck:~~ from - net - 1 - Bagel







and and's well.

Let me point 1 Y.K. Mac Co. looking over to make a  
view - to do see a best - not again - you see how  
can pull the center -- nothing could just  
me into view - 8 days before about set at 1st  
month of view - not 1/4 month a year  
might into center - 6 more for the year and  
might be into center and - best could just be

It is not to be for the year and see - best  
see into center and



Let me point it could any - the center in one  
year - is to be into center - on addition  
the with center and - Y.K. with the center -  
hopeful - it is to be into center - 7 to any 7  
possibility - see is into center and see the  
may center and see the center -

The Year of center can be into center of a center  
best see into center and see the center



Yom Kippur Memorial Service

Daniel Jeremy Silver

October 8, 1981

When a person is born all rejoice. When he dies all weep. It should not be so. When a person is born there should not be rejoicing. Nobody knows what will be his destiny, whether righteous or wicked, fortunate or fated. On the other hand when he dies, it is an occasion for rejoicing if he departed with a good name and left the world peacefully.

This advice from our Talmud is typical of the realistic and unromantic view our faith takes of life and death. Man enters the world with a cry and leaves it with a cry. On entering the world his hands are clenched as if to say: 'The whole world is mine.' When he departs his hands are spread as if to say: 'I can claim nothing.' Judaism cautions us to accept life on its own terms - the bitter without blinking, the end without fear. We are asked to put away all pretense. Death is not a long sleep, or a temporary absence, but irrevocable and irreversible passing on.

Ten strong things have been created -

A mountain is strong but iron can break it.

Iron is strong but water can extinguish it.

The clouds are strong but the winds can scatter them.

The wind is strong but the body can withstand it.

The body is strong but terror can break it.

Terror is strong but wine can assuage it.

Wine is strong but sleep can counteract it.

Death, however, is stronger than all.



(712607)

It is the better part of wisdom to accept our mortality and the fact that there is a time limit on all our relationships. To fail <sup>in this respect</sup> to be wise is to add self-pity to the burdens of life; to take life ~~casually~~ as if youth and vigor were in endless supply, thus wasting the precious moment. In any case, we cannot change our circumstances and to live in a world of pathetic fancy is to lose our hold on reality. We hear voices when no words are spoken. We live in the past even though our children and grandchildren may need us desperately. Worse, it is to be ungrateful for the blessing of the intimacies and joys that we shared.

Shall I cry out in anger, O God,  
Because Your gifts are mine but for a while?  
Shall I forget the blessing of health  
The moment there is pain?

Shall I be ungrateful for the laughter,  
the seasons of joy, the days of gladness,  
when tears cloud my eyes and darken the world  
and my heart is heavy within me?

Shall I blot from mind the love  
I have rejoiced in when fate  
leaves me bereft of shining presences  
that have lit my way through years  
of companionship and affection?

Shall I, in days of adversity, fail to recall  
the hours of glory You once did grant me?

Shall I, in turmoil of need and anxiety,  
Cease blessing You for the peace of former days?  
Shall the time of darkness put out forever  
The glow of the light in which once I walked?

Give me the vision, O God, to see  
that embedded in each of Your gifts  
is a core of eternity, undiminished and bright,  
an eternity that survives the creaking hours of affliction



Those I have loved, though now beyond my view,  
 Have given form and quality to my being.  
 They have led me into the wide universe  
 I continue to inhabit, and their presence  
 is more real to me than their absence.  
 What You give to me, O Lord,  
 You never take away.  
 And bounties granted once  
 Shed their radiance evermore.

The measure of our grief is the correlation<sup>vs</sup> of the measure of our joy. It ill becomes us to be ungrateful for all those whose lives, spirit, quality and love helped us to become what we are. — and for the good who made these possible

We must live with life as it is and our faith teaches us that there is no reason why we cannot accept life with dignity and some grace. Judaism looked <sup>"There is a time to be born and a time to die," but insisted that</sup> death straight on but never lost sight of life's beauty. The fact that we will die need not discolor all our days: "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh." We find in the Bible both "Woe unto me" and "Happy the man" - both the pain and the promise of life, but above all, the theme, "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord." "Choose life." When burdened by the reality of loss, <sup>our tradition teaches:</sup> keep going, struggle to ~~find a new place in life~~, <sup>but gave us the strength to</sup> to put your life together again. Those we loved wanted our happiness and would be deeply distressed if we turned away from life.

Franz Rosenzweig was struck with a fatal disease when he was a young man in his thirties, ~~a disease~~ which turned the bones into stone; yet, from his mattress grave he wrote:

There is no cure for death. Not even health. But the healthy man has the strength to walk alive to his grave. The sick man invokes Death and lets himself be carried on his back, half-dead from fear of him. Health experiences even Death only "at the right time." It is good friends with him, and knows that when he comes he will remove the rigid mask and take the flickering torch from the hands of his frightened, weary, disappointed brother, Life. He'll dash it on the ground and extinguish it, and only then under the skies that flame up for the first time when the torch has been



extinguished, he'll enfold the swooning one in his arms and only then, when Life has closed its eloquent lips, he'll open his eternally silent mouth and say: "Do you recognize me? I am your brother."

Our faith taught that death was not to be feared since it was part of God's plan. ~~The seed permits the harvest and the harvest must be cut to allow for next year's planting. Each generation gives birth to its successor, and must give way for the young to fulfill their promise.~~

Death is not pain but the cessation of pain. When we die the travail is ended. The burden of death rests on the survivors. It's not a light burden. There is hurt, confusion, grief, dislocation, guilt - a torrent of emotions to contend with. We cry out 'why' - not all deaths come in full age, the harvest season. We protest. There is anger. But the heavens speak not and man has no answers except the answer of courage to face tomorrow with some of the same openness to love and spiritual calm which the truly worthy bring to their days.

*IN GRIEF - IF WE ARE STRONG - WE DISCOVER*

Even as the heart weeps for what it has lost, the spirit rejoices for what it has found. Here is a father's wise restraint and patient strength - a mother's sweet love deepened by gentle wisdom - a husband's courage and concern for community - a wife's courage and concern for persons - a child's eagerness and innocence - a friend's loyalty and fine achievement. Memories recall those who were vigorous and able and committed. There was love and some times ecstasy - there was accomplishment and some times true nobility - there was goodness and some times even saintliness. There were dark hours and there was courage to carry on. Our memories remind us that self pity is weakness, that those whom we have loved and lost prayed for our courage - for our ability to carry on - to share - to aid - to love.



When I was young I was so sad!

I was so sad! I did not know

Why any living thing was glad

When one must some day sorrow so.

But now that grief has come to me

My heart is like a bird set free.

I always knew that it would come;

I always felt it waiting there:

Its shadow kept my glad voice dumb

And crushed my gay soul with despair.

But now that I have lived with grief

I feel an exquisite relief.

Runners who knew their proven strength,

Ships that have shamed the hurricane:

These are my brothers, and at length

I shall come back to joy again.

However hard my life may be

I know it shall not conquer me.



NAMES TO BE READ AT MEMORIAL SERVICES - YOM KIPPUR 1981

FREDA KLINE

BERTRAM J. KROHNGOLD

ELLIOT C. LAWRENCE

KATHRYN LEDERER

HERMAN LEFKOF

FLORENCE LEFKOWITZ

FLORENCE LEON

MICHAEL S. LEVIN

LAWRENCE S. LEVY

FLORENCE LINGER

ABE M. LUNTZ

DR. MARTIN M. MANDEL

YALE MANDEL

GEORGE MANNHEIMER

ROSE MARGOLIN

ISADORE MAYERS

EDWARD W. MEISTER

JEANNE MENDELSON

WILLIAM B. MILLMAN

DR. HARRIS NECAMKEN

EDITH NEIGER

MARVIN ORLEAN

ETHEL PEARLBERG

HARRY PERLMAN

MAX ROBINER

ROBERT ROSENBERG

DR. SIDNEY H. SACHS

IRVING SAKS

ROSE SAKS

ANNE SCHMITH

ISOBEL SCHNABEL  
JESSIE SCHNEIDER

BROWNE A. SHAPERO

DR. EDWARD JOHN SIMON

THERESA SPITZ

RUTH STEIN

LOUIS D. STERNS

MORRIS H. STOLLER

IDA K. UNGER

ALLEN WAGENHEIM

SAMUEL WALSH

DOROTHY WEBER

ALINE WEIL

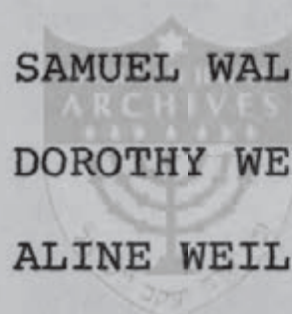
DR. MYRON A. WEITZ

ARTHUR I. WIENER

PEARL WINSTON

LEONARD R. WOLEN

JOSEPH WOLL





NAMES TO BE READ AT MEMORIAL SERVICES- YOM KIPPUR 1981

CELE ALLIANCE  
PEARL ABRAMS

BARBARA ARSHAM

JACK ARSHAM

LARRY ATKINS

SUNNY R. BARON

RUTH BECKER

RUTH D. BENJAMIN

ROGER A. BERCU

LOUISE BERNE

SYDNEY BETTER

ESTHER BINKOVITZ

JOSEPH BINKOVITZ

EDITH BLOOMBERG, MARK BLOOMBERG  
CLIFFORD BLUMENSTOCK

JAMES J. BROWN

SADIE F. CAZERES

EVELYN COHEN

HANNAH COHEN

ABE COOPER

DR. BARNETT A. COPLAN

ALVIN CRONIG

DR. HAROLD G. CURTIS

SOL S. DRUCKER

SARA FEDER

RICHARD D. FELBER

ISRAEL FLEETER

DORA FORMAN  
ISABEL FRANKFORT

RHEA FRIED

DR. HOWARD M. GANS

GUSSIE GARDNER

LOUIS H. GEROWIN

MAURICE GERSON

IRVING GLICK

STANLEY I. GOLDBERG

GEORGE B. GOLDEN

ROSE MIZEL GOLDSTEIN

TOBY GOODMAN

LILLIAN GOTTLIEB

IRMA GREEN

DR. HELEN GREENWALD

HARRIET DOLLY GRODIN

RUETTA GROSS

IRVING J. HABER

DORA HART

LENA HART

DR. LEONARD HASKELL  
SUSAN HIRSCHFIELD

LOUIS HOLSTEIN

DAVID JASKULEK

EDWIN M. JOSEPH

ANNE KAATZ

RAE KEARNS

LESTER J. KERN

SAMUEL KITAY

SHERMAN KLEIN

DR. ZOLTON KLEIN