

PRAYER

Eternal Parent of our soul, let our first thoughts today be of You, let our first impulse be to worship You, let our first speech be Your name, let our first action be to approach you in prayer.

For Your perfect wisdom and perfect goodness:

For the love with which You love humankind:

For the love with which You love us:

For the great and mysterious opportunity of our lives.

For the indwelling of Your Spirit in our hearts:

We praise and worship God.

Yet let us not, when this morning's prayers are said, think our worship ends. Rather from these moments of quietness let light go forth, and joy, and power, that will remain with us through all the hours of each day.

Keeping us chaste in thought:

Keeping us temperate and truthful in speech:

Keeping us faithful and diligent in our work:

Keeping us humble in our estimation of ourselves:

Keeping us honorable and generous in our dealings with others:

Keeping us loyal to every hallowed memory of the past:

Keeping us mindful of our eternal destiny as Your children.

O God, who has been the refuge of our ancestors through many generations, be our refuge today in every time and circumstance of need. Be our guide through all that is dark and doubtful. Be our guard against all that threatens our sprit's welfare. Be our strength in time of testing. Gladden our heart with your peace.

John Baillie - (Adapted)

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

History has to be rewritten in every generation, because although the past does not change, the present does; each generation asks new questions of the past, and finds new areas of sympathy as it relives different aspects of the experiences of its predecessors.

Christopher Hill



October 8, 2011

י תשרי תשע"ב

יום כפור Yom Kippur

Minchah – 4:30 PM

Ne'ilah – 5:45 PM

Arvit – 7:08 PM

Fast may be concluded – 7:17 PM

Havdalah & Teki'at Shofar - 7:27 PM

On This Week's Torah Portion - יום כפור

... Alternatively, in general, one vows to engage in or to refrain from an action, and only later realizes how difficult the vow will be to fulfill. He is absolved of the vow because it was not taken by his "real self." He has now replaced the misguided pseudo-I with his true self. Through teshuvah, he reverses the process of misidentification. (Machzor Mesorat haRav quoting R. Yosef Dov Soloveitchik)

The central theme of Yom Kippur is, of course, *t'shuvah*. While *t'shuvah* is generally translated as *repentance* the root meaning of the word is *return*. Ordinarily we think of this as a return to Gd, which in practical terms means a resolution to live our lives more closely in tune with Gd's Will as expressed in Torah, both Written and Oral. R. Soloveitchik appears to be pointing out an additional aspect to *t'shuvah* – returning to our own selves.

The quote is from a discussion of Kol Nidre. If you look at the translation of this prayer, you will see that it is not a prayer at all – rather it is a rather dry, legalistic paragraph that absolves us of any vows we have made in the past year. Historically there are those who opine that it was a way for those who had been forced to convert, e.g. during the Spanish Inquisition, to return to Judaism; they cite the introductory phrase: *anu matirin l'hitpallel im ha'avaryanim* / We give permission to pray with *avaryanim*. The plain meaning of *avaryanim* is transgressors, but in a bit of folk-etymology it is interpreted as Iberians.

In Jewish Law, a vow is absolute – "All that comes out of his mouth he shall do" (*Bamidbar* 30:3). If one creates a prohibition on himself (by vowing not to eat apples for example) and he eats an apple, it is legally identical to eating bacon. If one vows to bring a specific offering, the Rabbinical court can force him to fulfill that vow. There is, however, an out. If one can show a *bet din* of 3 members (who needn't be Rabbis), or one expert in the laws of vows, that he made the vow in ignorance of the consequences of that vow, and that he regrets ever having made the vow, then the court or the expert can annul the vow. The theory is that the vow was made in error, and is not only void from now on, but it is voided retroactively, as if it never occurred (much like the annulment of a marriage, as opposed to a divorce). It is as if we have gone back in time and rewritten history.

R. Soloveitchik explains how it is that we can change the past: put simply, we recognize that the person making the vow and the person that we really are, are two different people. The person making the vow was not, in fact, my real self. Rather it is what R. Soloveitchik calls the "pseudo-I," a covering over of the real "I" by layers of sin and encrustations of materiality. What the process of *t'shuvah* has done is allowed us to peel off these layers, to understand ourselves at progressively subtler and more abstract levels, until all that is left is our pure, unadorned, infinite Self. We do this on Yom Kippur in a rather straightforward way, by turning away from all material considerations altogether for a full day – no food, no drink, no bathing, no sex. R. Soloveitchik is telling us that this is the connection between Yom Kippur and absolution of vows/Kol Nidre – that just as absolution of vows "turns back the clock" to a more pristine state, so *t'shuvah* can "turn back the clock" to a state prior to sin and prior to separation from Gd. Ultimately, *t'shuvah* can return us to the level of Adam before the sin, a state of pure spiritual existence, where the body and the material world no longer come between our individual self and our universal, infinite Self.

R. Yisrael Salanter, the founder of the *Mussar* movement (which emphasizes ethics and building positive character traits) once said, "Most Jews work on *t'shuvah* during the period between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. The more pious work on *t'shuvah* through the month of *Elul* [the month right before Rosh HaShanah]. But I say *t'shuvah* has to begin right after *Ne'ilah*!" That is to say, *t'shuvah* must be a continual, round-the-clock and round-the-year process. R. Soloveitchik's insight explains why this is the case: *t'shuvah* is nothing less than becoming ourselves, of removing the barriers to actualizing our infinite potential, and infusing the infinite Holiness of the Source of creation into our individual lives and into our surroundings. Yom Kippur and *t'shuvah* are Gd's greatest gift to the Jewish people – let us be sure to use them wisely and well!

An easy and meaningful fast to all and a blessed 5772.

Rafi Rabinoff

UPCOMING EVENTS

YOM HAKIPPURIM

Friday, October 7

Minchah 2:00 pm; Candle Lighting no later than 6:17 PM
(Those who wish to light candles at home before the start of *Yom HaKippurim* and then ride to *shul* may do so. Lighting candles does not cause *Shabbat* or Holydays to begin; it is a pre-*Shabbat* or pre-Holyday act.)
KOL NIDRE Service 6:10 PM SHARP

Shabbat, October 8

Shacharit 9:00 AM; *Torah* Reading and *Haftarah* followed by Rabbi's Message 11:00 AM; Youth Services 11:00 AM; *YIZKOR* 12:30 PM; *Musaf* 1:00 PM; Adult Discussion Group 2:30 PM: "When Did the Shoah Begin?" presented by Paul Tesser

BREAK

Minchah 4:30 PM; *Ne'ilah* 5:45 PM; *Arvit* 7:08 PM
Havdalah & Teki'at Shofar 7:27 PM

Sukkot begins Wednesday, October 12 Minchah/Arvit 6:00 PM (see below)

Motzei Shabbat, October 15 ***Sukkot Campfire***, 8:00 PM. S'mores, snacks, schmoozing. No charge, sponsored by Youth Committee

Tuesday, October 25 Boniuk-Tanzman Lecture with Dr. Laurie Zoloth: "Jewish Bioethics and the Duties of Medicine: Repairing, Restoring and Healing in a Broken World." WashU Holden Auditorium, 7:00 PM.

Shabbat, October 29 **Dedication of the Ric Markowitz Teen Lounge.** *Kiddush* sponsored by the Youth Committee to express our appreciation to everyone who contributed to make this project possible.

SAVE THE DATE: *Motzei Shabbat*, November 19, 7:00 PM – **37th Israel Bonds Dinner** honoring Cyndee Levy. Guest speaker Dr. Jonathan Adelman: "Israel and the Middle East: Hope or Despair?" Invitations will be mailed soon.

Condolences to...Earl Salsman on the passing of his mother, Anne Salsman

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Friday 10/7 *Minchah* – 2:00 PM

Friday evening 10/7 – 6:10 PM

***Yom Kippur* – see above**

Sunday morning – 9:00 AM
Monday–Wednesday morning – 7:00 AM
Monday–Tuesday evening – **6:15 PM**

Sukkot

Wednesday evening – **6:00 PM**
Thursday–Friday morning – **9:00 AM**
Thursday–Friday evening – **6:00 PM**