



THIS
INITIATIVE
IS ENDORSED
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JOIN OUR
YOM KIPPUR WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE
‘Every Moment of Yom Kippur Affords Atonement’ *(Kereisos 18b)*
TAKE 15 MINUTES TO CHANGE YOUR YEAR

The trial was just about over. Then, at the last moment, a surprise witness took the stand. It was the defendant’s father.

“Please, your honor, I beg you, have compassion on my son. Forgive him and let him begin again,” the father wept. His voice was choked with sobs as he gazed upon the frightened, remorseful face of his son. He pleaded with such emotion that his own life force began to recede like an outgoing tide, leaving him limp and broken-hearted.

Finally, the father could cry no more. He looked up at the judge expectantly, hoping to see some glimmer of compassion.

“I have acquitted him as you have asked,” the judge pronounced.

It is this great gift – the chance for atonement and new beginnings – that Moshe Rabbeinu achieved for the People of Israel on the world’s first Yom Kippur. Less than six weeks after having received the Torah, the Jewish people had built themselves a Golden Calf. Hashem was prepared to erase the Jewish people from His Torah and begin anew, with Moshe as the new progenitor. Moshe pleaded for his people with all his strength, stating that if they would not be forgiven, his name, too, should be erased.

At last, G-d forgave Israel, with the words “Solachti kidevorea – I forgive, according to your words.” Moshe Rabbeinu ascended again to receive the second Tablets of the Law. The day he came down was the Tenth of Tishrei – Yom Kippur – and G-d resolved that on this day

“One must be very careful not to waste even one moment, Heaven forbid, from this [awesome] day.”

(R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach)

every year, He would turn His ear to pleas, remorse and change of heart. Hashem’s longed-for words, “Solachti k’devorea,” became a centerpiece of the Yom Kippur prayer.

Clearing the path of all obstacles between Himself and the Jewish people, Hashem even forbids the Satan from prosecuting on that day. This tremendous gift obliges each person to respond in kind, as Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach¹ explains:

“One must be very careful not to waste even one moment, Heaven forbid, from this [awesome] day. As the Gemara² teaches,

“Every moment of Yom Kippur affords atonement.”

Because of the infinite value of each moment of the day, many people follow the custom of refraining from unnecessary talk on Yom Kippur. Even those who cannot exercise that restraint for the entire day can reap the benefits of a set period i.e. fifteen minutes or a half-hour. Each undistracted moment adds to the precious treasure of atonement one takes away from this 25-hour window of opportunity.

Yom Kippur is a day in which we are invited to walk the path toward Hashem that was ploughed by Moshe Rabbeinu’s excruciating labor of the heart. But it is only when we awaken to the full grandeur of this day and purify ourselves to befit our proximity to Hashem that Yom Kippur’s life-giving gift of atonement is firmly within our grasp.

1. Halichos Shlomo on Moadim, Tishrei-Adar, Chapter 4, Footnote 7, Page 52 | 2. Kereisos 18b



PLEASE JOIN THE YOM KIPPUR INITIATIVE:

Prior to or on Yom Kippur, dedicate 15 to 30 minutes (more, if possible) of free time on Yom Kippur during which you will abstain from unnecessary speech or anything that is not within the spirit and purpose of the holy Yom Kippur day.

“I hereby accept upon myself, *bli neder* (without a vow), to abstain from unnecessary speech or anything which is not within the spirit and purpose of the holy Yom Kippur day, between _____:_____ and _____:_____.”
(TIME) (TIME)

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