

Hatarat Nedarim
The Release Of Vows

Petitioner: My friends, I ask the three of you to serve as judges in the court that is empowered to release one from vows. Will you please serve for me in this capacity?

The judges: Yes, we are prepared to hear you.

Petitioner: What follows is not intended to void promises I made to other people from which only they can release me.

In the last year I have from time to time made vows, sometimes speaking them out loud or had an intention, a resolution to change something in my actions, behavior and attitude in my mind. Some of these are in relation to myself, my body, my mind, and my soul. Some of these deal with the way in which I conduct myself in relation to other people. And most of all, there are those that deal with my relation to God.

Sometimes I took on a practice or a custom and did it at least three times and have since either willingly or unwillingly abandoned it and I know that this, too, has the power of a vow.

Many times when I ask for prayers for some people whether they are prayers for healing, for blessing or for the repose of souls departed, in which the formula includes “Because I shall contribute to tzedakah” and I may have forgotten to do that or not been aware, I ask you to release me from that, too.

All these I regret and I ask you to recognize my regret and release me from all those vows.

The judges: Hearing your regret, we release you. All is forgiven, all is released, and may it be that in the same way that we here below release you from theses vows and obligations, so may you be released from the court above from the same.

Petitioner: As I stand here and I am aware of my fickle nature in matters of vows, promises and resolutions, I hereby declare that for the coming year, should I again offer such vows, promises and resolutions, they should have no effect and not become binding on me. At this moment I regret any of these and do not wish them to be valid.

The judges: We have heard your declaration and consider it licit and legal.

May you be blessed with a good year, inscribed in the book of life and sealed for good.