

Dear Brother,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Yankel and I've been sitting in the row right behind you in shul for close to 16 years.

With the help of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I have a beautiful family and a successful business. I have everything I want and need.

Normally I would tell you this in person when I'd see you in shul during davening, or maybe when there is even more time to schmooze, during chazaras hashatz or krias haTorah.

However, recently that changed.

The past few months we've seen tragedy as never before. An entire family wiped out and recurring terrorist attacks. The ugly specter of anti-Semitism rising worldwide as never before. Patients lying in the hospital suffering from debilitating illnesses. The loss of so many close friends due to illness and fatal car accidents. The number of young almanos and yesomim is growing by the day. The number of families who can no longer stay afloat in these financially turbulent times is mind-boggling. There are so many similar situations that each one of us knows personally.

The strength in Klal Yisroel lies in the love and responsibility each member feels for the others. With this in mind, I am beseeching you – no, begging you – to join me in a unique project to help counter these horrible tragedies that our nation is facing.

We are just beginning a new year, one which we will pray will be filled with yeshuos and good health for all of us. One way to invoke Hashem's mercy is to follow the advice of the Tosafos Yom Tov: to focus on silence during davening as a way to bring Hashem's brachos upon us.

I am mekabel upon myself (bli neder) to refrain from talking during davening, with the sincere prayer that this kabbalah will bring greater brachos into my life and the lives of those who are an integral part of my life: all of you.

Please, please join me with whatever kabbalah you can make – for all the tefillos, just one, or even during chazaras haShatz or krias haTorah. It will lend an aura of greater kedushah to our shuls and batei medrash. It would be a tremendous zechus for a yeshuah for all those in need if you would agree to join me in this powerful source of brachah.

This Yamim Noraim, don't look down during davening. Look up. Look around you and see who needs your tefillos for health, for livelihood or for peace. Daven for them, and b'ezras Hashem all of our tefillos will be answered l'tovah.

This Yamim Nora'im, let us storm the Heavens ... with our silence.

אבינו מלכנו סתום פיות משטיננו ומקטריגנו

I love you all and wish you and your loved ones a k'sivah v'chasimah tovah.

Yankel