

READER:

As we stand in synagogue listening to Kol Nidre's mournful melody, we think of teshuvah—to return and respond. We return to an awareness that we are standing in the presence of All Life and must cultivate the internal responses that make us a partner in that relationship. While we know intellectually what is expected, we grapple with the mystery of what life holds. Will we face challenges by using our minds as well as our hearts? Will we do the right thing because we are aware of our relationship with the Divine? Perhaps. But even if we have not yet repaired our frailties, we acknowledge that the possibility is still available to us.

(Sally Stich)

READER:

Granting dispensation from vows is considered a legal declaration, and Kol Nidre is traditionally recited in the setting of a formal court — a *beit din*. Tonight we connect to our ancient tradition as we convene our *beit din* for our B'nai Havurah community in the year _____.

READER:

Three members of our community come forward to hold the Torah. In a single voice, we declare: "All, including those who have transgressed, are permitted to come and pray."

Who among us, we might ask, has not transgressed? Who among us is without failings? Calling upon our own authority, we grant permission to pray together as an incomplete people. (Margery Goldman)

Please rise, if you are able, as the ark is opened and the Torah is removed.

ALL SING:

אֹר זָרַע לְצַדִּיק וְלִישְׁרֵי לֵב שִׂמְחָה.
שִׂמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים בֵּיהוּה וְהוֹדוּ לְזֵכֶר קִדְשׁוֹ.

*Or zarua latzadik, ul'yishrey lev simcha.
Sim'chu tzadikim badonai v'hodu l'zecher kodsho.*

(Lightbeams are seeded for the righteous,
happiness for those steadfast of heart.)

