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Rabbi Cy Stanway

T.B.M.

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The Dilemma

G'mar Hatima, to all of you on this lovely Yom Kippur or "Day of Atonement" - may we all be inscribed in the book of life this year. As you know, yom kippur is considered by many as the holiest day of the year. It is all about atonement and repentance, and that is why I am standing here today.

Today, on Yom Kippur, I am on the beema seeking forgiveness as well as reconciliation.

Many of you know me as Michael Pingitore the Madrich, or Michael Pingitore Social Action Vice President of Salty among other things. Those are just mere memories in a world where nothing seems tangible anymore. I look back on those days and I remember how good things were. But today, I am healing and asking for forgiveness.

I am asking for forgiveness because February of this year I was arrested for possession of marijuana. This is not about what happened that night, but what I am doing about it, and that is why I am speaking today on this day of atonement.

Today I want to bring you on a journey, a journey much like Moses through the Sinai Desert. This expedition has barely even begun with me on my way back to society from the beginning where the trust cracked, crumbled, and collapsed, and my integrity was put in serious jeopardy. I am here to atone for my sin – that much is obvious. And part of this atonement is my own personal repentance for what I have done.

I am no perfect child, nor am I impeccable, I am a human being capable of tremendous mistakes.

On that dreadful night I broke the trust between me, my mother, father, brother, friends, the rabbi, the congregation, and many, many more people. I was holding one end of a rubber band that was let go striking everyone's hand who had ever trusted me. Overall I have disappointed a multitude of individuals, including

myself, and I can completely understand if someone wishes to turn their back on me. I hope you won't, though.

There is no reason for what I have done because there is no good reason for it to have been done. These following months and days since it has felt like walking around with a sign on my back that only I can read which says, "do not trust this man, he is dangerous." I wish to one day remove that sign. Today, I begin removing it.

I once had the future within my grasp, my plan right ahead of me. I took it for granted, and now I have made it impossible for me to ever achieve, but it is something I must live with in order to move on. I am still extremely apprehensive regarding the future, but I believe with the right motivation from my community I can move forward dismantling any obstacle in my way.

my strategy now is to focus on school, but most importantly strengthen and rebuild my ties within the community. It doesn't take just a village to raise a child, it takes a village to help a child grow in more ways than one. I am asking for every single one of you sitting there to not ostracize me, but to welcome me back within

the community. I want to thank my parents for being here to support me, as well as the rabbi for allowing me this prestigious opportunity.

Thank you for letting me share the beginning of my journey of repentance and forgiveness and atonement with you. I can think of no better way to begin the difficult task of rebuilding your trust.