



# YOM KIPPUR

IN  
**60**  
MINUTES  
(OR LESS)

## Introduction

---

Beginning Rosh Chodesh Elul, our focus turns to repentance. Every morning, at the conclusion of the Shacharit service, we recite “*L'Dovid Hashem Ori,*” [Psalm 27] which contains allusions to this special time of year and the process of repentance. To awaken us from our slumber, the Shofar is sounded, as well. Beginning on Motzai Shabbat prior to Rosh Hashanah, we commence the daily recital of Selichos in the pre-dawn period, continuing throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, and concluding on Yom HaKippurim. In all, this period of intense penitence lasts a total of forty days.

This number corresponds to the third time that Moses ascended to heaven to plead on our behalf after we sinned by worshipping the Golden Calf. His prayers were ultimately accepted, and, as a sign of our atonement, he returned on the fortieth day bringing the second set of Holy Tablets, and thus consummating the renewal of our covenant with the Almighty. The day of his return was Yom HaKippurim, and the Torah established this as the day upon which the Jewish people will appear before the Almighty each year to similarly gain atonement for their sins.

Consequently, Yom Kippur is an extremely serious, yet remarkably uplifting and joyous day. It is the day upon which G-d seeks to renew our unique relationship with Him, and will go to great lengths to do so. Even slight stirrings of return to Him will be met with generous favor, and there's virtually no limit to the levels of spiritual ascendancy one can attain on that day. This, however, places a great responsibility upon us to fully utilize this opportunity. We mustn't squander these valuable moments on food or drink, trivial pursuits or petty squabbles. We must strive to look our best when we appear before Him, since so much is dependent upon this day. Even if we cannot possibly maintain this elevated spiritual state year-round, in His infinite kindness, He promised to judge us based only on how we appear on this day.



#### GOLDEN CALF TIMELINE

1. **6 Sivan** – The Revelation at Mt. Sinai
2. **7 Sivan** – Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Two Tablets from G-d.
3. **16 Tammuz** – Forty days later, the people panicked over Moses' absence and fashioned the Golden Calf. The next morning they rose early to worship it.
4. **17 Tammuz** – Moses descended from the mountain, carrying the Two Tablets. Upon witnessing the people rejoicing and dancing around their idol, he smashed the Tablets.
5. **19 Tammuz** – Moses ascended Mount Sinai for a second period of 40 days to plead with G-d on Israel's behalf. At the end of the 40 days, G-d instructed him to carve two new tablets to replace the first set.
6. **1 Elul** – On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moses ascended the mountain with the tablet lets he carved for a third period of forty days.
7. **10 Tishrei** – Moses received the Divinely-inscribed second Tablets from G-d and G-d's assurance of complete forgiveness of Israel's sin, and descended the Mountain. This day was Yom Kippur.

The number forty also symbolizes the number of weeks it takes for a fetus to develop in the womb and a newborn child to emerge into the world. Similarly, during this period of forty days, we are capable of remaking ourselves so that by the time we stand before the Almighty in judgment on Yom Kippur, we are as free of sin as a newborn child.

#### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

A mikveh [ritualarium] must contain forty cubits of water in order to ritually purify us from spiritual contamination. The forty-day period leading up to Yom Kippur effectively acts as a Mikveh to purify us from spiritual decay. –

*Atteres Yehoshua Al HaTorah, VaEschanan, Bnai Yissachar Maamar Chodesh Elul, Maamar 3*

#### FROM THE MYSTICS

"My son, give to Me your heart, and let your eyes observe My ways." [Proverbs 23:26] This verse, expressing the Almighty's desire for His children's devotion, asks us to give our hearts over to Him. The Hebrew words for "to me" is *Li*, and its numerical value is 40. This hints to the period of forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Yom Kippur when we dedicate our hearts to the service of the Almighty.

*Mevo L'Chochmas HaKabbalah*

To better understand the power of this day, imagine someone embroiled in a serious entanglement with the law. Keenly aware of his guilt, he knows that the even the most lenient judge will be forced to sentence him to many long years in prison. As sentencing day approaches, he grows increasingly nervous with the knowledge that long-term incarceration is virtually inevitable. Suddenly, a ray of light shines into his life. His attorney advises him that the Federal Government has chosen to recognize the critical role his ancestors played in establishing the United States, when we were fighting the British in 1776. Furthermore, it values his own contributions to society, and is truly interested in his welfare. The Government is willing to forgive and forget, so long as he is willing to appear before a judge in a months' time, express his sincere desire to abide by all the laws of the US Constitution and live a law-abiding life henceforth.

How would this individual spend the next month? Would he continue to break the law with impudence, or would he work to bring all his affairs into full compliance with the law? Will he appear before the judge and insolently declare his unwillingness to respect the law, or would he humbly proclaim his fealty to the law of the land and beg forgiveness?

Through His Torah, the Almighty informed us that due to our own merits, and our ancestors' myriad contributions to His cause, He deeply values our relationship with Him and is prepared to overlook our disloyal behavior if we are prepared to appear before Him on Yom Kippur in contrition. We would be remiss if we failed to take advantage of this glorious opportunity given only to us.

### Yom Kippur in Scripture

וְהִיְתָה לָכֶם לְחֻקֵּי עוֹלָם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ תִּעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם וְכָל מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֲזָרָח וְהַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לִטְהָר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְדֹוֹ תִטְהָרוּ: שִׁבְתֵּן שָׁבֶתוֹן הִיא לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם חֻקֵּי עוֹלָם... וְהִיְתָה זֹאת לָכֶם לְחֻקֵּי עוֹלָם לְכַפֵּר עַל בְּגֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֶם אַחַת בַּשָּׁנָה וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְדֹוֹ אֶת מֹשֶׁה.  
ויקרא פרק טז כט-לד

*All this shall be an eternal law for you. Each year on the 10th day of the 7th month you must fast and not do any work. This is true of both the native-born and the proselyte who joins you. This is because on this day you shall have all your sins atoned, so that you will be cleansed. Before G-d you will be cleansed of all your sins. It is a Sabbath of Sabbaths to you, and [a day upon which] you must fast. This is a law for all time. The priest who is anointed and installed to be High Priest in his ancestors' place shall make this atonement, wearing the sacred vestments of white linen. He shall be the one to make atonement in the*

holy inner sanctuary, in the Communion Tent and on the altar. The atonement that he makes shall be for the priests and for the people of the community. All this shall be for you as a law for all time, so that the Israelites will be able to gain atonement for their sins once each year.

Leviticus 16:29-34

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: אַךְ בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ שְׁבִיעֵי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֵׁיכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשָּׁה לַיְדוּד: וְכָל מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם כְּפָרִים הוּא לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִכְרַתָּה מֵעַמִּיהֶם: כִּי כָל הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲנֶה בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהִאֲבֹדְתִי אֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִקְרָב עִמָּה: כָּל מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֲקֵת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם שְׁבֹתוֹן הוּא לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֵׁיכֶם בְּתַשְׁעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בַּעֲרֵב מֵעֲרֵב עַד עֲרֵב תִּשְׁבְּתוּ שְׁבֹתֵיכֶם:

ויקרא פרק כג-לב

G-d spoke to Moses, saying: The 10th of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement for you. It is a sacred holiday when you must fast and bring a fire-offering to G-d. Do not do any creative activity on this day; it is a day of atonement, when you gain atonement before Hashem your G-d. If anyone does not fast on this day, he shall be cut off [spiritually] from his people. If one does any creative activity on this day, I will cause him to disappear from among his people. Do not do any creative activity [on this day]. This is an eternal law for all generations, no matter where you may live. It is a Sabbath of Sabbaths to you, [a day] upon which you must fast. You must observe this holiday from the ninth of the month until the following evening.

Leviticus 23:26-32

וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֵׁיכֶם כָּל מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֶיהָ לַיְדוּד רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ פָּר בֶּן בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה שְׁבַעַת תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: וּמִנְחַתֶּם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לֶפֶר שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכַבֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכְּבָשִׂים: שְׁעִיר עֲזִים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלְּבַד חֲטָאת הַכִּפּוּרִים וְעֹלֶת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחַתָּה וְנִסְכֵיהֶם:

במדבר פרק כט-ל

The 10th of this month shall be a sacred holiday to you when you must fast and not do any creative activity. As a burnt-offering for an appeasing fragrance to G-d, you shall present one young bull, one ram, and seven yearling sheep, making sure that they are unblemished. Their grain offering of wheat meal mixed with oil shall be 3/10 [of an ephah] for the bull, 2/10 for the ram and 1/10 for each of the seven sheep. There shall also be one goat as a sin offering, in addition to the Atonement sin-offering. [These offerings] and their libations are all in addition to the regular daily burnt-offering and its meal-offering.

Numbers 29:17-11

The Prophet Yonah was sent to the city of Ninveh with a message that its citizens had forty days to repent their evil ways or they would face destruction. This message is one that we seek to highlight by reading the Book of Yonah as the Haftorah of the Minchah service.

“Ki Yom Kippurim Hu Lechaper Aleichem” — For it is a day of atonements, when you gain atonement. The word *Kippurim* is plural and implies that it is a day of many levels of atonement, some more profound than others. All gain atonement to some degree, but those who invest greater energy into the day, merit atonement to a greater extent.

Ksav V’Kaballah

FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

“It is a Shabbos of complete rest for you...from evening to evening you shall rest...” From the evening of this Yom Kippur until the evening of the next Yom Kippur you shall draw out the special tranquility that you experience on this holy day throughout the entire year. The physical discomforts that one suffers on Yom Kippur bestow upon the person special Divine favor that can last all the way until the next Yom Kippur.

Yismach Moshe

“Yom HaKippurim is a time of repentance for all, for the individual and for the community, and it is the climax of the period of pardon and forgiveness for Israel. Therefore, all are obligated to repent and confess on Yom HaKippurim.”

Maimonides, Hilchos Teshuvah 2:7

“How do we know that this day is ‘a day of repentance’ for all? Because it is written, ‘For on this day you shall have all your sins atoned, so that you will be cleansed. Before G-d you will be cleansed of all your sins.’ [Leviticus 16:30]”

Sefer HaZichronos



## This Day in History

---

**A** number of significant historical events occurred on Yom Kippur.

- The Patriarch Abraham was circumcised on this day and each year the Almighty sees the blood of the covenant of Abraham and forgives all our sins.
- Moses descended for the third and final time from Mt. Sinai, bearing the second set of Tablets, a gift from the Almighty that symbolized His willingness to forgive us for the sin of the Golden Calf.
- The sainted Rabbi Akiva, the leading sage of his generation, was martyred at the hands of the Romans on Yom Kippur.



## Yom Kippur in the Words of the Sages

---

- “There are 365 days in the solar calendar. Satan, whose numerical value is 364, stands in accusation against Israel on all of them with the exception of Yom Kippur.”  
*VaYikra Rabbah 21:4*
- “So, too, Israel, although they soil themselves with their sins all year round, Yom HaKippurim comes and atones for them.”  
*Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:37*
- “And if you repented during the Ten Days of Repentance, and come before me on Yom HaKippurim, even if you have sins stretching from earth to heaven, I will whiten them like snow.”  
*Pesikta D’Rav Kahanah*
- “It was a great pleasure before the Almighty that He gave it [i.e. Yom HaKippurim] to Israel with intense love and joy.”  
*Tanna D’Bei Eliyahu Rabbah*
- “If not for Yom HaKippurim, the world would not stand, for Yom HaKippurim atones in this world and in the World to Come.”  
*Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliyahu*

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

“Remember us for life” – May we merit a life in which our sole objective is to fulfill Your desire and observe Your commandments, “O King, Who desires life” – Then You will be desirous of this life, “And inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, O living G-d.” – So that Your will shall be fulfilled.

*Tiferes Shlomo*

## The Ten Days of Repentance

---

**T**he Ten Day period, beginning on Rosh Hashanah and concluding on Yom Kippur, is referred to in Rabbinic literature as The Ten Days of Repentance. In his introduction to his chapter on The Ten Days of Repentance, Chayei Adam [Rabbi Avraham Danzig, 1748–1820] writes:



*In G-d's great love for His nation, for He desires kindness [and] objects to the demise of the wicked, anticipating that he will repent from his evil ways and live... Therefore He chooses to wait for him to repent not one or two days, but expands the timeframe for repentance significantly. Immediately upon the commencement of the year and the month, all the [heavenly] gates are opened: the gates of repentance and the gates of forgiveness and atonement. They remain open until the time for the Neilah prayer on Yom HaKippurim and an announcement is given forth, "Repent O' rebellious sons, and I will heal you from your treachery..." 2:143*

**MAIMONIDES WRITES:**

*Even though repentance and pleading for forgiveness are always appropriate, they are even more appropriate in the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and the Day of Atonement, when they are immediately accepted, as it is written, 'Seek out the Lord while He makes Himself available.'*

*Hilchos Teshuvah 2:6*

In recognition of this special opportunity for self-improvement, our sages instituted a number of customs designed to help us focus on the special nature of The Ten Days and thereby affect significant changes in our character in a short time. Following is a short list of customs:

1. Greater care is exerted in the performance of mitzvot and extra stringencies are assumed.
2. An extended version of Selichos is recited daily [except on Erev Yom Kippur when it is shortened considerably.]
3. Some have a custom not to hold weddings during these days.
4. The Kaddish is amended slightly with the addition of the word *u'le'eila*, which emphasizes the exalted nature of the Almighty.
5. The Shabbat that occurs during the Ten Days of Repentance is known as Shabbat Shuva, for the Haftora portion begins with the words, "*Shuva Yisroel*" [Return O' Israel,] a passionate exhortation to the nation to repent sincerely and completely. It is customary to attend a lecture dealing with the laws of Yom Kippur and repentance on this day as well.
6. The Ark is opened and the Avinu Malkeinu prayer is recited twice daily, Shacharit and Minchah.
7. Four additions are inserted into the daily Amidah:
  1. "Remember us for life, O King, Who desires life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, O Living G-d"
  2. "Who is like You, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creatures mercifully for life!"

During the Ten Days of Repentance, two blessings in the Amidah are also modified slightly to allude to the fact that these days are a time of judgment when G-d displays His Sovereignty. The words, "*HaEl HaKodosh*" [the Holy G-d] are replaced by "*HaMelech HaKodosh*" [the Holy King]. One who forgets to make this change must repeat the Amidah. The words, "*Melech Oheiv Tzedakah U'Mishpat*" [King who loves charity and justice], are replaced with "*HaMelech HaMishpat*" [The King of Justice]. Forgetting to make this change does not obligate one to repeat the Amidah.

**FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS**

"Remember us for life"- Help us Almighty live a "lively" life, full of enthusiasm for Your mitzvot!  
*Lev Simchah of Ger*

Each of the Ten Days of Repentance corresponds to one of the Ten Commandments, in sequence. Ideally, one should focus on improving himself in that day's particular commandment throughout each of the Ten Days. It is noteworthy that the two days of Rosh HaShanah during which we declare G-d's sovereignty and oneness, correspond to the first two commandments which are, "I am the Lord, your G-d," and "You Shall Not worship gods of others," and Yom Kippur, the day in which abstain from all physical temptation, corresponds to "You shall not covet..."

*Yaaros Dvash*

**FROM THE MYSTICS**

Three of the Ten Days of Repentance are holy in nature, two days of Rosh HaShanah and one of Yom Kippur. The remaining seven correspond to the seven days of the week. Each day of the Ten Days represents its corresponding days throughout the year and acts of repentance on that day generate atonement for one's behavior on that day throughout the year.

**FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS**

The name Shabbat Shuva is commonly translated as, "Shabbat of Return." It can also be translated as, "The Recurring Shabbat," and understood as a symbol of the recurrent state of Shabbat that we will enjoy in the End of Days with the coming of the Messiah. The exalted state we reach during this time of year is a preview of our existence in the Messianic Era.

*Degel Machaneh Efraim*

A great sinner once appeared before a wise man and requested his assistance in repenting his myriad sins, but insisted that he was not capable of swearing off all temptations. The wise man reassured him that this was not necessary. Rather, he was to accept upon himself to only speak truth from that day on. The sinner agreed to do so and then realized that if he were caught sinning, he would now have to own up to his misdeeds. This realization aided him greatly in avoiding wrongful behavior from then on.

*Maharsha, Tractate Sanhedrin*

#### FROM THE MYSTICS

There wasn't a more potent Temple Service than the daily incense offering, known as the Ketoress, which gave off a powerful fragrance and had a rare ability to generate a large measure of Divine favor. In fact, the highlight of the Yom Kippur service was the incense-offering performed by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies, the one and only day of the year that he entered the inner sanctum. How appropriate it is, then, that the word Ketoress has a numerical value of 713 [when adding one for each letter], the same as the word for repentance, Teshuvah.

*Kehilos Yaakov 109*

One may wonder why Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, should be tainted by the confessions of our misdeeds. Would it not be more appropriate to conceal them and pretend they don't exist? In truth, there is no greater pleasure for the Almighty than when His children cleanse themselves of their impurities and can stand before Him thoroughly pure, both inside and out. Even if He must endure the indignity of watching the sins pile up before His eyes, it is worthwhile in light of the spiritual heights His children can attain through this refinement process.

*Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabbah, Chapter 1*

#### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

The Confessions are arranged in the order of the Aleph Bet to symbolize one's regret over violating the Torah, written with the twenty-two letters of the Aleph Bet.

*Avodas HaKodesh*

3. "And inscribe for a good life all the children of Your covenant."
4. "In the Book of Life, blessing and peace and good livelihood, may we be remembered and inscribed before you – we and your entire nation the House of Israel, for a good life and for peace."

## Repentance

One of the greatest gifts given us by the Almighty is the gift of repentance, which we can actually undo our misdeeds. This is accomplished through a firm resolve not to repeat our actions, sincere regret for having behaved in an improper manner, and confession of one's sins. Lest one mistakenly believe that this is merely a ritual devoid of serious introspection, Maimonides points out,

*One who follows this procedure, but does not firmly resolve in his heart never to behave in this manner again, is like one who immerses himself in a mikveh while holding a contaminating object in his hand, thus rendering the immersion useless.*

*Hilchos Teshuvah 2:3*

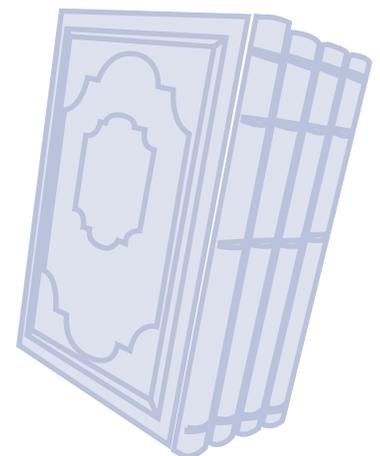
In truth, repentance is a precious mitzvah year-round, yet it is never so effective, and hence so worthwhile, as it is during the Ten Days of Repentance. As Maimonides writes, "Even though repentance and pleading for forgiveness are always appropriate, these acts are even more favorable in the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when they are accepted immediately, as it is written,

*Seek out the Lord while He may be found.*

*Hilchos Teshuvah 2:6*

Since confession is such a major aspect of the repentance process, it is recited during each of the five prayers of Yom Kippur; Maariv, Shacharis, Mussaf, Minchah, and Ne'ilah. One should recite it in the standing position with his head slightly bowed to express submission and contrition and in a voice audible only to himself. It is customary to strike one's heart, the seat of passion and desire, lightly with his fist while reciting each stanza of the confessional, as if to say, "You have caused me to sin through your counsel and wayward thoughts."

Ariza"l explains that striking the heart is more than just a means of assigning blame, but has deep mystical meaning and significantly aids one's attempts to gain atonement.



**THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY COMPONENTS TO THE CONFESSION RECITED ON YOM KIPPUR:**

1. **Ashamnu** [we have become culpable] – A brief paragraph wherein each of the twenty-two letters of the Aleph Bet represents a form of sin.
2. **Al Chet** [For the sin of] – This too, is based on the Aleph Bet, but it consists of forty-four verses, two for each of the twenty-two letters.

Although these two Confessions cover a wide variety of misdeeds, one should insert specific sins for which he wants to repent that are not mentioned in the regular version.

**REPENTANCE IN THE WORDS OF OUR SAGES**

1. “Even one who was wicked all his days and repented in his last moments, they will make no more mention of his wickedness.”  
*Tractate Kiddushin 40b*
2. “One’s penance and good deeds advocate on his behalf. Even if there are 999 accusing angels, and only one defending angel, he will be spared.”  
*Tractate Shabbos 32a*
3. “Moses said to the Almighty, ‘Master of the universe, when the Jewish people sin before You and repent, transform their intentional sins into involuntary sins.’”  
*Tractate Yoma 36b*
4. “Repentance is so powerful that it reaches the Divine Throne.”  
*Tractate Yoma 86a*
5. “Repentance is so powerful that its merit can cause an evil decree to be shredded.”  
*Tractate Rosh Hashanah 17b*



## Customs of Erev Yom Kippur

**KAPPAROS**

This widespread custom, dating back to the Gaonic period, typically consists of taking a live white fowl and circling it around one’s head while reciting a short declaration asking that this fowl serve as one’s substitute and expiation. The fowl is then slaughtered and given to the poor. Great care must be taken to conduct the ceremony in a manner that is sensitive and not neglectful of the birds. Some have a custom to use money instead, which is then distributed to the poor.

The great Rabbi Saadya Gaon was once asked by his students why he engaged in constant repentance. Surely he wasn’t constantly sinning to necessitate such behavior? He replied that he had once spent the night at an inn where he was treated as was any other guest. The next morning, upon witnessing the townspeople converging upon him, the innkeeper realized that he was a person of stature and began to apologize profusely for not treating him properly. Astonished, Rav Saadya looked at the innkeeper and said, “But you treated me very well. Why do you feel a need to apologize?” The innkeeper looked at him and responded, “I treated you like any other guest. Had I known yesterday that you were a person of stature, I would have treated you much better.”

This, explained Rav Saadya, is the attitude we must assume toward the Almighty. Even if we served Him well yesterday, today we’ve matured a bit more and appreciate His greatness and the potential in our relationship with Him even better. In hindsight, we realize that we could have done much better in our efforts. That, too, gives us reason to repent.

The Confession is recited twice, a total of ten times, beginning Erev Yom Kippur and ending Ne’ilah. This corresponds to the Ten Commandments which we violated and need to rectify.

If one sinned against his fellow without his knowledge, it may not be advisable to request forgiveness from him since that would force the offending party to reveal his misdeed and cause the one he offended additional anguish. Instead, he should request forgiveness in a general manner without revealing the particulars of his sin.

*R’ Yisroel Salanter*

“Samael [the prosecuting angel] sees that there is no sin present among Israel on Yom HaKippurim and he says, ‘Master of the Universe, you have a nation on earth that is comparable to the ministering angels. Just as the ministering angels go barefoot, so, too, Israel goes barefoot on Yom Kippur. Just as the ministering angels do not bend their knees, so too, the Israelites stand on their feet throughout Yom HaKippurim. Just as the ministering angels are free of sin, so too, the Israelites are free of sin. Just as the ministering angels dwell in peace and harmony, so too, the Israelites maintain peace and harmony on Yom HaKippurim.’ The Almighty hears this testimony from the prosecutor, and then forgives Israel.”

*Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer*

"[Additionally,] once each year [i.e. Yom Kippur], Aaron shall make atonement on the horns of [this altar]. For all generations, he shall make atonement with the blood of the atonement sacrifice once each year..."

*Exodus 30:10*

The juxtaposition of atonement on Yom Kippur to the command to "give a charitable atonement-offering" indicates the importance of pledging charitable gifts on Yom Kippur, a time-honored custom.  
*Baal HaTurim*

"When you take a census of the Israelites to determine their numbers, each one shall be counted by giving an atonement-offering for his life..."

*Exodus 30:12*

#### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

The charitable atonement-offering referred to above which hints to the importance of charity on Yom Kippur was a *Machatzis HaShekel* [Half-shekel.] The word *Machatzis* alludes to at the wondrous power of charity to forestall death, for its first and last letters spell *Met*. The middle letters spell the word *Chetzi* [Half] indicating that by donating the half-shekel to charity, death can be averted.

*Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk*

"One who eats and drinks of the ninth of Tishrei, Scripture considers him as having fasted on the ninth and tenth of the month!" [Tractate Berachos 8b] Since he eats in order to have the strength to fast the next day, the eating can be considered part of the fasting of the tenth, and rewarded as such. Thus, it is especially important to partake of a hearty meal shortly before the onset of the fast, since this meal will greatly impacts one's ability to fast.

*Shelah HaKadosh*

The Hebrew word for "fast day" is *Taanis*. The letters of this word can be rearranged to spell "*Tet Ani*" – give to a poor man. This alludes to the statement of our sages, "The primary reward for a fast day is determined by the amount of charity dispensed." [Brachos 6b]

*Shelah HaKadosh*

Although eating on Erev Yom HaKippurim is a mitzvah and considered as if one had fasted, one must not think that it has the power to atone like Yom Kippur. While certainly valuable in its own right, only Yom Kippur can effect full atonement.

*Kli Yakar*

The text recited is: "This is my exchange, this is my substitute, this is my expiation. This rooster is destined to depart this life/these moneys will go to charity, but I am going to a good, long life and peace."

*"It is a great mistake to believe that one's atonement depends on performing the custom of Kapparos with fowl... If people would listen to me... it would be greatly preferred for them to fulfill this custom with money... especially since the custom is to give the slaughtered fowl or their monetary value to poor people anyhow. Either way, one must recognize that this custom is not what will influence his atonement. Rather it is the awareness that whatever is done to the bird should really be done to him, other than the fact that the Almighty gave him the opportunity to repent and escape this fate and visited it upon the fowl instead..."*

*Chayei Adam*

#### REDUCED SELICHOT

Throughout the Ten Days of Repentance leading up to Yom Kippur, we increase the amount of Selichot recited daily. On Erev Yom Kippur, we decrease the number of Selichot recited.

#### APPEASEMENT

*"Therefore, on Erev Yom Kippur, every man shall set his heart on appeasing everyone against whom he has transgressed, for the expiation of sins between man and G-d occurs on Yom Kippur, but those between man and his fellow, are not forgiven on Yom HaKippurim until he has appeased his fellow. This is true, even if he has only harmed him verbally."*

*Tur Shulchan Aruch, O"Ch 606*

One must make multiple attempts to appease his fellow and the offended party should try to be extra-forgiving and accept his goodwill. If someone who requires forgiveness fails to request it, it is still worthwhile to forgive him anyhow. This is especially important because when all of Israel are at peace with one another, the prosecuting angel's ability to portray us negatively is greatly diminished.

#### IMMERSION

There is a custom that dates back to the Gaonic period to immerse in a ritual bath [mikveh] on Erev Yom Kippur. Some are careful to do so after midday, prior to reciting the Minchah service, to purify themselves before reciting the confession of the service. Two reasons offered for this custom are to remove ritual impurity and to prepare for repentance.

## CHARITY

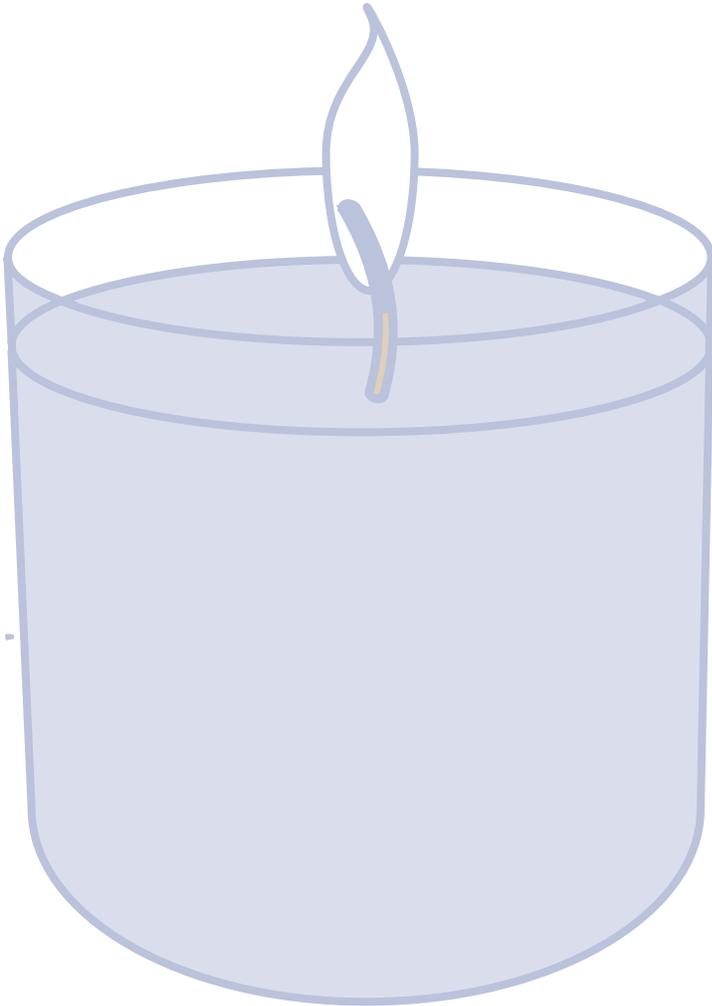
Throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, it is especially meritorious to dispense charity generously, for it is written,

*“Charity saves one from death”, Given its proximity to the judgment of Yom Kippur, it is especially important to distribute charity on Erev Yom HaKippurim to increase one’s merits. Many communities have a custom to place charity boxes on the Bimah before the Minchah service and encourage the congregation to contribute generously.*

*[Proverbs 10:2]*

## EATING

It is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom HaKippurim, and one may even reduce the amount of time spent in Torah study so as to allow him sufficient time to engage in this mitzvah.

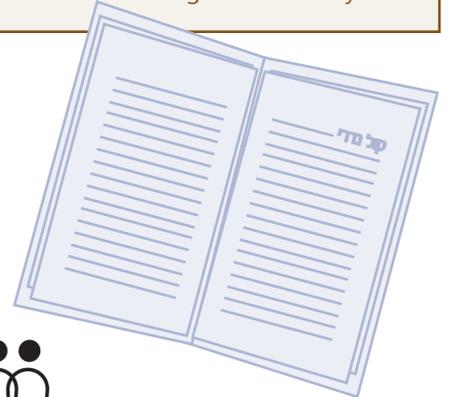


In general, women are exempt from time-bound mitzvot. Eating on Erev Yom Kippur is a primary example of such a commandment and, in theory, women should be exempt. Nevertheless, some halachic authorities maintain that since the obligation to eat on Erev Yom Kippur is to enable one to fast on Yom Kippur itself, and women are obligated to fast on Yom Kippur, they’re also included in the mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur.

*Sdei Chemed*

Many have a custom to purchase special foods, particularly fish, for their meal on Erev Yom Kippur, basing this practice on the following episode related in Midrash Rabbah [Genesis 11:4]. “One Erev Yom Kippur, a simple tailor went to market to purchase a fish for his meal on Erev Yom Kippur. That day, the fisherman had only one fish to sell and the tailor found himself bidding against a servant of the governor who had come to purchase a fish on his master’s behalf. The two of them continued to bid against one another until the price reached the princely sum of 12 dinar and the governor’s servant was forced to concede. Hearing that he had lost his meal to a simple tailor, the governor summoned the tailor to his mansion and furiously demanded an explanation. “What shall I do,” asked the tailor. “We have one special day each year in which all the sins we committed over the course of the year are forgiven. Shall I not honor that day with special foods?”

Judaism demands that we celebrate life and always look to the future with optimism and hope. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we may forget our sufferings or the messages they were meant to inspire. Instead, we dedicate a time to commemorate them and internalize their messages through prayer, fasting, tears, and mourning practices. During this time, we include in our thoughts not only events which occurred during this specific time, but also the array of tragic events that occurred throughout our history.



The pull to temptation rests in the heel of a person and the most effective means of conquering this drive is by “cooling one’s heels.” Therefore, on Yom Kippur, when our focus must be solely on spiritual achievement, we are bidden to go shoeless. This is the reason that the Kohanim in the Holy Temple were required to go barefoot, and that Moses was asked to remove his sandals when he approached the burning bush. Where intense spiritual engagement is required, the drive toward temptation must be subdued.

*Yaaros Devash*

The five primary prohibitions on Yom Kippur correspond to the five times the word “Nefesh” [soul] appears in the Torah portion discussing Yom Kippur [Leviticus 23:26-32.] It also corresponds to the five aspects of the human soul, *Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, Yechidah, Chaya*. On this day as well, we recite five prayer services [Shacharit, Musaf, Minchah, Neilah, Maariv,] and the High Priest immersed himself five times throughout the day, [and changed his clothing five times during the day.]

*Baal HaTurim*

“One who repents out of love for the Almighty, will have his inadvertent transgressions considered merits on his behalf” [Tractate Yoma 87a] When one plants seeds, the seeds must first rot in order to yield beautiful produce. The rotting process is healthy and beneficial, considering the end result. So it is with inadvertent transgressions. When they lead to increased love for the Almighty through the repentance process, they are seen only as temporary means to this enhanced love and are therefore worthy of reward.

*Degel Machaneh Efraim*

#### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

On Yom Kippur, the Jewish nation is bound to the Almighty with powerful bonds of love. Through this, they are raised to the degree of souls that no longer need their body to exist on earth. Engagement in the physical aspects of life interferes with this intense bonding experience between the Jewish people and the Almighty.

*Shem M'Shmuel*

One who is especially corruptible in a particular area, and effectively strengthens his resolve to improve that area of his character through repentance, is beloved before the Almighty like a choice sacrificial-offering in the Temple, and his reward is very great.

## Laws of Yom Kippur

There are five primary restrictions on Yom Kippur aside from the standard 39 classes of creative activity that are forbidden on the Shabbat. The penalty for one who partakes of food and drink on Yom Kippur is very grave, as the verse [Leviticus 23:29] states, “For any person who will not be afflicted on this very day shall be cut off from his people.”

WITH REGARD TO THE RATIONALE BEHIND THESE PROHIBITIONS, SEFER HACHINUCH [313] WRITES:

*“Among the foundations of this mitzvah is the fact that it was a great kindness of the Almighty toward His creations to establish one day each year to atone for all their sins if they choose to repent... Therefore we are commanded to fast on this day because food, drink, and other physical pleasures arouse the physical to be drawn after pleasure-seeking and sin, and obstruct the intelligent soul from pursuing truth which is service of G-d – the sweet and worthwhile endeavor for any intelligent person. It is unbefitting to appear before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment with a heart that is heavy with thoughts of physical pursuit, having partaken of food and drink. A person is judged on Yom Kippur based on who he is at that moment. Therefore, it's essential to empower the soul and diminish the physical body on this special day...”*

- 1. Eating & Drinking:** With certain exceptions, no food or drink may be consumed unless a person is ill and under the care of a qualified physician who understands the stringent nature of the fast, but nevertheless instructs him to eat or drink. Even then, it may be necessary to limit consumption to minimal amounts within a given time period.
- 2. Washing:** Washing for pleasure is forbidden with hot or cold water. Removal of dirt and washing one’s hand upon arising is permitted. However, one should not wash past his knuckles.
- 3. Leather Shoes:** Footwear made of leather is forbidden to wear. Even if only a small strip of leather is on the shoes, they may not be worn.
- 4. Anointing:** Daubing oneself with anointing oil or perfume is forbidden.
- 5. Marital Relations:** Yom Kippur is a day to purify the existing souls, not to initiate new ones. [*Rem”a M’Panu*]

## Kol Nidrei

This custom, enacted during the Second Temple era by the Men of the Great Assembly and rooted in the Zohar [2:116:1], is practiced universally by Jewish communities across the world, and throughout the centuries. Essentially it is a means of nullifying vows, those made for the future and [according to many authorities,] those made regarding the past, too. Since Jewish law mandates that a Beis Din may not convene to nullify vows on the Shabbat or Holidays, so Kol Nidrei is performed before the onset of Yom Kippur while it is still daytime.

The primary reason offered by the commentators for this hallowed practice is because Yom Kippur itself atones for sins between Man and G-d, whereas appeasement atones for sins between Man and his fellow. Neither of those, however, atones for one who vowed to donate to charity and later forgot his vow, which means it will remain unfulfilled. The recitation of Kol Nidrei annuls those vows and therefore makes it possible for one to receive full atonement on the Day of Atonement.

## Customs of Yom Kippur

There are numerous customs unique to Yom Kippur that have been instituted over the centuries, and each person should follow his customs. What follows is a short list of some of the more universal customs:

**Kittel** – Many have a custom to don a Kittel [white robe] on Yom Kippur since it reminds us of the garment worn by the deceased and reminds us of the somber nature of the day.

**Honoring the Day** – Although the Torah insists that we afflict ourselves on this day through the aforementioned Five Afflictions, we must not exceed those restrictions in an overt manner. Instead, one should honor the day as it has a status of a Yom Tov [Holiday], which one must honor and glorify.

**Jewelry** – Although one must dress in a festive manner as befits a holiday, some have a custom not to adorn themselves with jewelry to symbolize their trepidation over the impending judgment of the Day.

**Talit** – A Talit is worn throughout the prayer services of Yom Kippur, including the evening prayers. [Since a blessing may not be recited over a Talit at night, it is important to don it prior to sundown while it is still daytime.]

**Yizkor** – It is customary to pledge money to charity on Yom Kippurim on behalf of the deceased and to recall their souls through the Yizkor prayer for they too, gain atonement on Yom Kippurim.

It is important to note that Kol Nidrei does not cover vows that one specifically intends to exclude, nor is it a license to make promises that one cannot fulfill. Its primary purpose is to cover commitments that one has entirely forgotten about and has no means of recalling. It also cannot absolve us of contracts that we drew up and signed in good faith.

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

“Our bonds [i.e. prohibitions] should not be valid bonds, and our oaths shall not be valid oaths.” [From the Kol Nidrei liturgy] Our sages teach that when the Jewish people were exiled, the Divine Presence went into exile with them. This is alluded to by the verse [Jeremiah 40:1] “Being bound in chains among all the captives of Jerusalem.” Before commencing the prayers of this uniquely holy day, we pray that the bonds which restrict us from having open access to the Divine Presence be untied and removed, so that our prayers may ascend and be accepted fully by the Almighty.

*Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk, Shem M'Shmuel*

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

In truth, every sin carries a measure of violation of an oath and vow, for our obligation to abide by the strictures of the Torah is predicated upon the vows we made at Sinai. Just as an oath can be annulled, so too our sins can be undone through the process of *Teshuvah* [repentance], which transforms our misdeeds into merits. Thus, Kol Nidrei, which summons the power of annulment to free us of our vows, is a fitting commencement to the Day of Atonement.

*Likutei Halachos*

The reason Yom Kippur is referred to as Yom Kippurim [plural] is because it atones not only for the living, but for the deceased, as well.

*Darchei Moshe*

Given the restrictions against eating and drinking, it will be difficult for a person to meet his daily quota of 100 blessings. Thus, it has become customary to recite a blessing over sweet-smelling spices at various points throughout the day and enjoy their pleasant fragrance, as this replaces some of the missing blessings.

*Chemdas Yomim*

Although Satan, the prosecuting angel, is always hard at work pointing out the flaws of the Jewish people, there is one day each year that he is rendered speechless; Yom Kippur. This is symbolized by the fact that the numerical equivalence of the word, *HaSatan* [the Satan] is 364, one less than the total number of days in the year for on one of these days, [Yom Kippur], he is incapable of carrying out his mission.

*VaYikra Rabbah 21:4*

“Nothing stands in the way of repentance.”

*Zohar*

“And let them [the people of Ninveh] turn each one from his evil ways and from the thievery that is in their hands. (Yonah 3:8) What is meant by ‘and from the thievery that is in their hands?’ Shmuel said: ‘Even if he stole a beam and built it into a building, he must pull down the entire building and restore the beam to its owner.’”

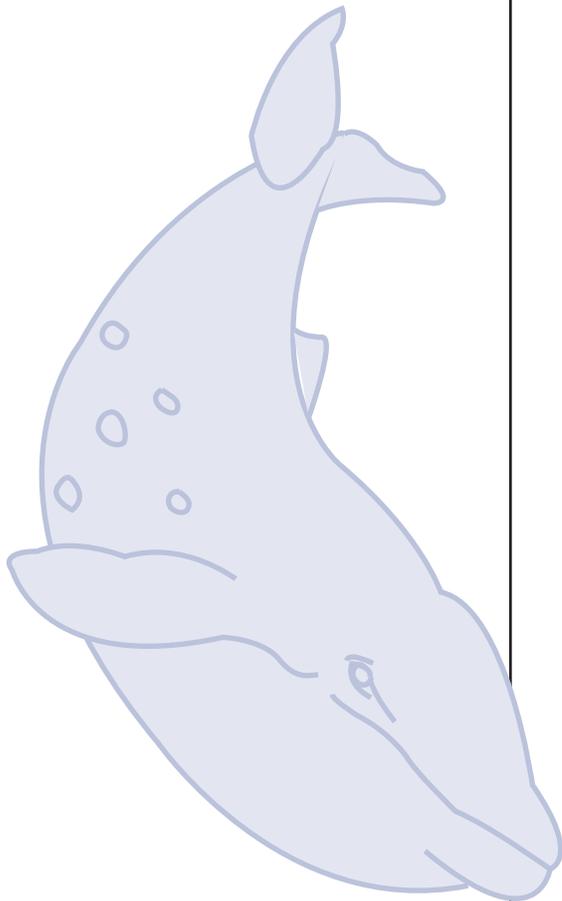
*Talmud, Tractate Taanis 16a*

## The Book of Yonah

One of the shortest among Biblical books, the Book of Yonah is also one of the most mysterious and difficult to understand. Sandwiched among the Twelve Prophets, it reads like a story that is difficult to believe on many levels. It begins with Yonah attempting unsuccessfully to flee G-d after being instructed to warn the city of Ninveh that they will soon be destroyed for their wickedness, and his eventual realization that this is an impossible task. The people of Ninveh take his admonition seriously and repent wholeheartedly. G-d accepts their penance and does not destroy them. Fearing that people might now consider him a false prophet, Yonah pleads with G-d to take his life. G-d helps him understand that the alternative, destroying an unrepentant Ninveh, is not an attractive option, by first giving him and then removing a tree that offers him shade from the sweltering heat.

**THERE ARE MANY REASONS BEHIND THE CUSTOM TO READ THE BOOK OF YONAH ON YOM KIPPUR. HERE ARE A FEW:**

1. To demonstrate that one cannot run away from G-d, or his G-d-given responsibilities.
2. To demonstrate the power of repentance. The people of Ninveh were corrupt beyond description, yet in a mere forty days, they managed to overhaul their behavior.
3. To highlight the great lengths to which G-d will go to assist us in repenting. He would much prefer that we repent than be forced to suffer the grave consequences of our behavior.
4. Yonah was reticent to go to Ninveh, because he suspected that they would repent, and he feared that this would reflect negatively upon the Jewish people who often failed to pay heed to the admonitions of the prophets. His love for the Jewish people drove him to act irrationally and disobey G-d's will. Although he was chastised for his behavior, we must learn from his example to avoid reflecting negatively upon our fellow Jews, especially on Yom Kippur when the specter of an unfavorable judgment hangs over our heads.
5. Scripture clearly articulates the idea that the people of Ninveh were forgiven not as a result of their fasts and sackcloth, but because they repented their evil ways, as it says, “And G-d saw their deeds, that they repented from their evil ways and G-d reconsidered the evil that He had promised to visit upon them and did not do so.” [Yonah 3:10] We learn from this that the fasting and discomfort of Yom Kippur is not a substitute, but an inspiration, for proper repentance.



## YONAH FACTS

1. Yonah lived after King David and the Prophet Samuel and was a student of the Prophet Eliyahu.
2. His widowed mother sheltered Eliyahu from the wicked Izevel, and in gratitude, Eliyahu resuscitated her son Yonah, when he suddenly perished.
3. For a time, the Jews believed him to be a false prophet.
4. His mother was from the Tribe of Asher and his father from Zevulun.
5. Yonah spent three days and nights inside the fish.
6. The fish was swimming in the Sea of Reeds while Yonah was inside.
7. The city of Ninveh was a three-day walk from end to end.
8. Yonah initially went to the port of Yaffo to find passage out of Israel. When he found that no ships were leaving from Yaffo, he walked for two days until he found a ship willing to take him on as a passenger. This was done to test his resolve to flee.
9. When the sailors saw the miracles that G-d performed on Yonah's behalf, they discarded their idols and converted to Judaism along with their families.
10. The Book of Yonah is the only Biblical tale that takes place entirely outside of the Land of Israel, with non-Jews playing all the supporting roles.

Although they could have simply repaid the value of the stolen beam, the people of Ninveh insisted on returning the actual theft, even though it meant demolishing an entire building to do so.

## The Temple Service

At no point during the Temple Services performed throughout the year did the High Priest dare enter the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Holy Temple. The exception to this rule was Yom Kippur, during which he entered for a short few moments to perform some of the Temple Services unique to that day. These Temple Services are referred to by the Biblical commentators as *Avodas P'nim* (inside-service), whereas the rest of the day's services are known as *Avodas Chutz* (outside-service).

It was critical for the High Priest to perform the inside-services in complete compliance with protocol, for even a slight deviation could lead to his death. This happened during the Second Temple Era to many High Priests, who acted in accordance with Sadducee custom.

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

Although sincere repentance is a possibility for all humans, as evidenced by the story of Ninveh, the Jewish people can achieve more through their repentance than others. Through their repentance, they not only affect atonement and avoid retribution, but they achieve great closeness to the Almighty as well.

*Shem M'Shmuel*

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

How could Yonah, a great and holy prophet, mistakenly believe that he could really flee from the Almighty? Did he not know that the Almighty is present everywhere? He was asked to prophesy to the people of Ninveh. Prophecy is a result of a deep connection with the Almighty. Yonah hoped to busy himself with traveling and in this manner he would be too preoccupied to focus on his relationship with the Almighty and be incapable of prophesying. In return, the Almighty isolated him in the belly of a fish with no place to turn, other than back to Him.

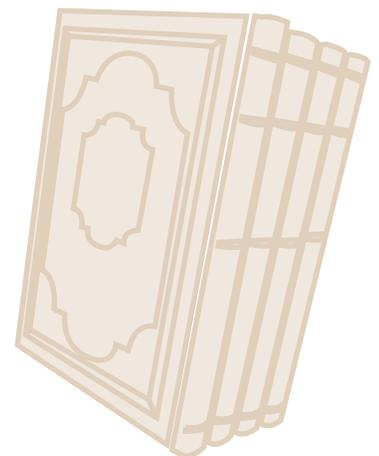
*Noam Elimelech*

The lesson here is that our daily engagements can easily prevent us from communing with our Maker and only through concerted efforts will we maintain the connection necessary to build this precious relationship.

### FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

“She is more precious than pearls’ [Proverbs 3:16] - This verse refers to the study of Torah that is more precious even than the High Priest who enters the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.” [Talmud, Tractate Sotah 4b] The High Priest, when entering the Holy of Holies, only gets to stand between the poles of the Ark, whereas one who studies Torah comes “face to face” with the Almighty as if he'd entered the Ark itself.

*Bas Ayin of Rabbi Avraham Dov of Avritch*



### THE PREPARATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST FOR YOM KIPPUR

“The week before the tenth [of Tishrei,] the Sanhedrin, sequestered the High Priest [in the Temple]... They sprinkled water of the Red Heifer upon him in order to purify him. To accustom him to the Yom Kippur Service, he would sprinkle the blood [of the daily offering on the altar], burn the daily-incense and prepare the Menorah.

The Elders of the Court joined him. Each day they instructed him, ‘Please recite orally the service of Yom Kippur as described in the Torah.’

On the morning of the ninth day of Tishrei, they led the High Priest to the eastern gate of the Holy Temple and passed before him the fine animals that would be used for the sacrificial-offerings of that day... As sundown approached... the elders of his tribe would teach him how to fill his hands with incense.

They would exact a pledge from him to burn the incense only when he was already within the Holy of Holies. His flesh would grow tense, and he would cry because he was suspected of being a Sadducee...

He stayed awake the night of Yom Kippur by presenting, or listening to, a discussion of laws of the Oral Torah... The priests surrounded him and kept him awake until midnight with their study...”

*Yom Kippur Machzor*

### FROM THE MYSTICS

There was no more dangerous job in the universe than that of the High Priest who had to enter the Holy of Holies, a place that even the Fiery Angels may not enter. In order to avoid his coming under the influence of the evil-eye of jealous people, at this particularly dangerous moment, he was instructed to don simple white linen garments, which ward off the evil-eye.  
*Chessed L’Avraham*

### WHY IS THE SHOFAR SOUNDED AT THE CONCLUSION OF YOM KIPPUR?

- Frustrated at his inability to accuse on Yom Kippur, Satan waits impatiently to begin again at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. The sound of the Shofar confuses him and delays his mission.
- To recall the merit of *Akeidas Yitzchak* [The Binding of Isaac] at the moment that the decree is sealed.
- To announce that night has fallen and the children should be fed.

While performing outside-services, the High Priest wore the same full complement of eight priestly garments which he wore while performing year-round Temple services. These garments were known as *Bigdei Zahav* [golden garments,] because they contained gold threads. On Yom Kippur, while performing the inside-services, he wore four white linen garments, known as *Bigdei Lavan* [white garments,] instead. He began the morning wearing the Golden Garments, and then switched to linen, then back to gold, and then back to linen. He concluded the day wearing the golden garments one last time. Thus, he wore a total of five sets of garments on Yom Kippur. In between each donning, he immersed himself in a mikveh [ritual bath.]

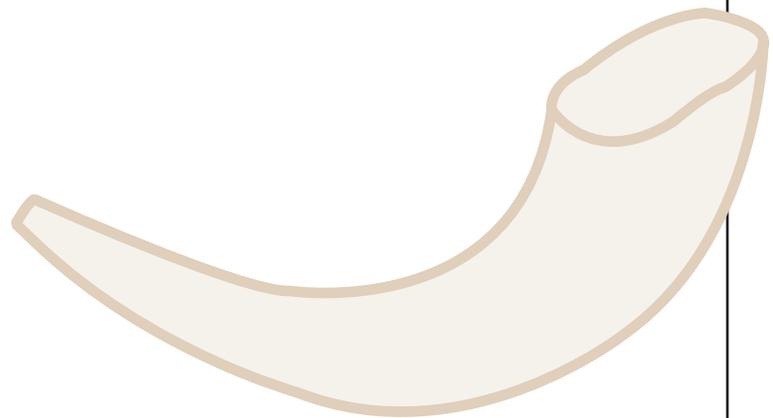
There were quite a number of unique Temple Services performed on Yom Kippur, all with the goal of generating greater atonement, and the High Priest had to practice diligently beforehand to ensure that they would be performed at top speed and with exacting precision.

The entire nation would gather at the Holy Temple to witness and participate in the service. A portion of the Yom Kippur liturgy is devoted to lamenting our inability to participate in this wondrously inspiring event now that the Beis Hamikdash is not standing.

### Neilah

On Yom Kippur, not only is Mussaf added to the thrice daily prayer services, but also an additional service known as Neilah is added, bringing the total to five. The name signifies “closing,” since it is the prayer with which we conclude Yom Kippur when the Gates of Mercy are about to be closed. Given the finality of the moment, Neilah should be recited with fervent intent and concentration.

The custom is that the Ark is left open throughout the duration of the cantor’s recital of the Amidah. The Confession of the Neilah service is shortened, and the service concludes with impassioned declarations of G-d’s sovereignty through the recital of “Shema” and other verses. Following Neilah, one long blast of the Shofar is sounded.



## Make It Meaningful

It is not enough if this Yom Kippur is just like all the others in past years. Here are six suggestions for how you can make this Yom Kippur even more meaningful than those that preceded it:

- 1. Not so fast:** Instead of waiting anxiously for the fast to conclude, utilize the time away from gastronomic delights to contemplate the larger issues of life. Your concentration will be enhanced and afterwards you'll feel it was worth it.
- 2. Talk to yourself:** Instead of waiting to hear what the rabbi has to say about all and sundry, ask yourself what you would say to yourself if you were the rabbi.
- 3. Click it or Ticket:** Sure, you can purchase an expensive ticket to the High Holiday services. Or, you can head on over to [www.highholidayservice.com](http://www.highholidayservice.com), click around, and make a reservation at one of the hundreds of free, or reduced rate, services available to folks just like yourself, all around the country.
- 4. Book ahead of time:** Don't just show up at services and expect to be inspired. Get ahead of things by reading the excellent book "The Rosh Hashanah Yom Kippur Survival Kit" by Shimon Apisdorf, and make every moment meaningful.
- 5. Make mom proud:** Long derided as a flaw inherent in Jewish mothers, guilt can actually serve a very constructive purpose on Yom Kippur as it spurs us to let go of our smugness and assume an attitude of contrition instead.
- 6. Thinking of you:** When praying, don't only have yourself in mind. There are so many who could use a prayer uttered on their behalf as well.

## Points to Ponder

- Is it really so hard to refrain from food and drink for twenty-four hours?
- Are you content with who you are, or do you feel that there's room for improvement?
- Is Yom Kippur a day to dread or to look forward to? Why?
- Why do so many Jews celebrate Yom Kippur; even the unaffiliated?
- What is the connection between Yom Kippur and the holiday of Purim?
- If G-d abhors sin, why does He make it so easy?
- Does your synagogue or temple motivate you to grow Jewishly or encourage stagnation?
- If there's one thing you could change about yourself, what would it be? What's holding you back?



### PARTNERS IN TORAH

Rabbi Eli Gewirtz, *Director*

PARTNERS IN TORAH is a cost-free over-the-phone learning opportunity for Jewish adults to discover Judaism its culture, history, and traditions at their pace and their schedule.

For more information, call

**1.800.STUDY.42** or visit

**[www.partnersintorah.org](http://www.partnersintorah.org)**

