



# THE H.A. YOM KIPPUR SOULVIVOR GUIDE

**5776**



Dear Reader,

There is one mitzvah that a person who has never sinned can ever accomplish, that is the mitzvah of teshuva. The very day of Yom Kippur calls upon us to reach deep within ourselves and to return to our ultimate source, Hashem.

It is a tremendous gift that Hashem accepts our teshuva. It is an even greater gift that it is considered a mitzvah! I once had a student who said “I know Rabbi how bad I was and I am sorry!” I responded by saying YOU are not bad only your actions. This student’s mistake is one we often make. While regret is an essential part of the teshuva process we must not confuse that with shame, the error of thinking that we are our actions and therefore we are bad. Hashem’s acceptance of our teshuva is a testament of his love for us. It reaffirms the notion that our essence is and always will be pure. Yom Kippur we are given stronger tools to polish our neshamot and reach ever greater heights of connection to Hashem. It is my hope that this Soulvivor Guide will enrich your Yom Kippur and encourage you to return!

This booklet was written by fourteen young men and women in Hebrew Academy High School. These

creative students voluntarily took their time to contribute and create this wonderful and insightful guide. The students and I would like to thank Ms. Tia Ayrton for her wonderful input. We would also like to thank the teachers and staff for all their support and creative ideas. A big thank you to Rabbi Sorin Rosen who graciously gave of his time to guide me through the many technical questions I sent his way.

With Hashem's help may we all merit a teshuvah shelaima.

Gmar Chatimah Tova,

Rabbi Eliyahu Delouya

## DID YOU KNOW?

*In Perek Shirah the Hen is said to sing a praise to Hashem for sustaining the whole world with food*

*תִּרְנַנְגְּלֵת אוֹמְרֵת. נִתֵּן לָחֶם לְכֹל בְּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ*

## Kaparot

Zachary Rehany Grade

10

Kaparot is a ritual that symbolizes atonement. Kaparot can be done any time during the Ten Days of Repentance; ideally, it is done on the eve of Yom Kippur. A person swings a live chicken or a sack

of coins over his or her head three times, while reciting specific verses from the Machzor. Doing this transfers one's sins to the chicken or coins. Kaparot symbolizes the tradition done by the Kohein Gadol when he would recite a confession over a goat on behalf of the Jewish People. Afterwards, that goat was sent to his death at

Azazel. Today, animal sacrifices are not allowed, because there is no Beit Hamikdash, and so the chicken or the coins replace the sacrificed animal and acts as a vehicle for individuals to cleanse themselves of their sins. The chicken is then slaughtered and given to the poor for food. **WARNING!** A person should not think that this ceremony itself actually atones for him. On the contrary, he should look at the ceremony as being a symbol, and realize that everything that is being done to the chicken should really be

done to him as consequence for his sins. This will make him regret his sins, and, as a result, Hashem will accept his repentance.



## Kaparot Q & A

Becky Benisti Grade 11

*What is the custom of Kaparot?*

The custom of Kaparot consists of taking a chicken and rotating it

above one's head three times while reciting a prayer for atonement.



*What happens to the chickens after the rotating?*

The chickens are then shechted (slaughtered) according halacha (Jewish Law).

*Is that all?*

No, the chicken, or the chicken's value is then

given to the poor and needy.

*What is the purpose?*

On a basic level we ask Hashem that all our bad decrees should be nullified through the shechting of the chicken.

*Where can I do Kaparot?*

Most people will attend their family's synagogue where Kaparot are often done; others will go to chicken coups to perform kaparot.

*Does any chicken do the trick?*

Yes, but some have the custom for a woman to use a hen and for a man to use a rooster.

### BRAIN TEASER!

Can you think of another mitzvah that is performed on behalf of an unborn child?

*What happens if a woman is expecting?*

The custom is to do Kaparot for the unborn child as well

*Is a rooster or a hen used in such a case?*

Both are used in this case because the gender of the baby is undetermined.

*Do I have to use a chicken?*

No, some people use money instead.

*Why did the elephant cross the road?*

Because the chickens were at synagogue doing their night “rotation.”



# Kapparot- A Chasidish Twist

Elisheva Eisenberg  
Grade 11

If Hashem ruled the world through strict justice, then every time a person would sin a 100-ton weight would fall on them, (which is around the same weight as 50 cars squashing that person). However, Hashem rules the world through the middah of mercy and therefore allows us to do Teshuva. A custom through which we do Teshuva is by the ritual of Kapparot, where

you take a live chicken, fish, hen, rooster or money and you wave it around your head three times while saying a specific prayer. Later, the animal or money is given to Tzedaka. Part of the Tefilah that we say is as follows: "This is my exchange, this is my substitute, and this is my atonement. This chicken is going to die (or this money will go to charity), but I am going to live a good long life in peace."



One day during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, a man who lived in the village of Lizhensk, Poland went to his Rabbi, Rabbi Elimelech. He asked his Rebbe to see how he does the Minhag of Kaparot because he felt that the Rabbi must do it in an extraordinary way. The Rabbi answered that his Kaparot are done the exact same way that the villager does it, but he should go see the way that Moshe the Tavern Keeper performs his Kaparot for a far more inspiring experience. Eager to see an extraordinary Kaparot, the villager walked all the way to the tavern where Moshe was. When he got there he asked Moshe if he could stay at the tavern, but Moshe refused saying that there was nowhere in the tavern to sleep. "Please," begged the villager, "I've been traveling all day, and I want to rest a while. I don't need a room -- I'll just curl up on a bench for a few hours and be on my way." "O.K.," said Moshe. "We'll be closing up shortly, and then you can get some sleep." In the morning, Moshe whispered to his wife saying that it was time

for Kaparot, trying not to wake up his guest who he did not know was already awake and listening to every word he said. The wife took out two notebooks and Moshe started reading from the first one. Moshe read as he wept about all the sins that he transgressed in the past year. He read about the time where he said a few words of Lashon Hara and about the time when he neglected to give his daily coin to Tzedaka. He continued weeping and reading until he turned the last page of the notebook. In the second notebook, Moshe

read about all the misfortunes that



happened to him and his family throughout the year. He read about the day one of his children was ill, about the time their cow died and about the time when they froze for a few nights because they had no fire wood. After finishing the second notebook, Moshe looked up and said, "So you see, Hashem, I have sinned against You. Last year I repented and promised to fulfill Your

commandments, but I have sinned anyways. But last year I also prayed and begged You for a year of health and prosperity, and I trusted in You that it would indeed be this way. "Dear Father, today is the eve of Yom Kippur, when everyone forgives and is forgiven. Let us put the past behind us. I'll accept my troubles as atonement for my sins, and You, in



Your great Mercy, shall do the same. "Moshe

took the two notebooks in his hands, raised them aloft, circled them three times above his head, and said: "This is my exchange, this is my substitute, this is my atonement." He then threw the notebooks into the fireplace, where the smouldering coals soon turned the tear-stained pages to ashes.

## **Tips for an Easier Fast**

Leah Pisarevsky

Grade 11

The most solemn religious fast of the

Jewish year is Yom Kippur. One of the purposes of fasting is to “rejuvenate your soul”. For some people, fasting is easy, and for others, it’s more difficult. Here are a few tips to help ease the fast.



You can ease the fast by preparing your body one week in advance. For example, one could vary one’s meal schedule. For most people, the “hunger” that

you feel at meal time is simply a result of your body preparing itself to receive food at an expected time. For example, if you’re always eating lunch at 12:00, and dinner at 6, your body starts to prepare to digest at those times. If you alter your meal schedule you will find that it lessens your hunger at meal times, which will prepare your body for the fast so that your stomach won’t expect to receive food at certain times.

Another thing you should do is to drink a lot of water. The need for water is much greater than the

need for food, and you most probably don't drink enough water during regular days. So, during the last few days before Yom Kippur, make sure you drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration during your fast.



Lastly, make sure not to overeat the night before Yom Kippur. Your meal the night before should be chosen carefully. During the day of the fast, there are also a few

things you can do; going to synagogue will keep you occupied (aside from the fact that you will be praying anyway).

A big tip is to NOT talk about how hungry you are. Don't spend the whole day complaining about your hunger, and don't talk about foods that you crave because it will just make everything worse. Have a meaningful fast

### DID YOU NOTICE?

*Did you notice a difference between the meal before Yom Kippur and the meal before Tisha B'av?*

# Seudat Hamafseket

Reuven Minciotti  
Grade 9

The tradition of Seudat HaMafseket is an important tradition filled with great meaning. The translation of the words Seudat HaMafseket is “the meal that interrupts”. One eats this meal after the recitation of Viduy (confessions) and is therefore an interruption between viduy and yom kippur. The Talmud says a person may not feel up to confessing after eating

such a large meal that is why we say Viduy before the Seudat HaMafseket. If a person dies at the meal (G-d forbid), they will have died without having said Viduy and Hashem will give them a judgement with less mercy since they didn't do Viduy.

The Seudat HaMafseket should be large and festive, creating a painful differentiation between the satisfaction of being



full and the craving for food experienced during the fast, while, at the same time, helping us to complete the entire fast.

We can gain insight into the day of Yom Kippur itself by looking at the nature of the Seudat HaMafseket. This meal is eaten in a joyful and happy manner as we are excited to look back on our year, realize our mistakes and become ready to ask for forgiveness from Hashem.

If a person did something wrong he can't just stay stuck on that mistake and consumed with guilt

over it; therefore, he must do Teshuva and focus on how he will succeed the next time. Just mainly thinking about his sins will get him nowhere. Hashem created us with a Yetzer Hatov (good inclination) and a Yetzer Harah (evil inclination), we must try our hardest to make the Yetzer Hatov dominant. There are times where we do succeed in fighting the Yetzer Harah and there are times we don't. In the times that we don't succeed, we must get back up and become stronger. Yom Kippur is that time when we get stronger. The

Seuda itself strengthens us physically and reminds us to strengthen ourselves spiritually as well. We must look at our sins to do proper repentance, but we must mostly think of how we will have a better year than the last.

**FOOD FOR  
THOUGHT!**

*Did you ever  
wonder why we say  
'Shana Tovah' and  
then add  
'Umetukah'?*

## **The Difference Between a 'Happy New Year' and a 'Good Year'**

Sarah Azoulay Grade 9

Did you ever notice that Jews do not wish each other a happy new year but rather a good new year? What is the difference between the two? In an edition of Atlantic Monthly there was an article entitled "There's More To Life Than Being Happy". Emily Esfahani Smith, the author, says that

researchers found that a meaningful life and a happy life are very different. A meaningful life corresponds with being a giver, and a happy life corresponds with being a taker. A happy life characterizes a selfish and shallow life, a life where someone is always satisfied with where they are and not looking to grow. Great people chose a life of sacrifice and hard work instead of personal interest and happiness and they left a legacy of inspiration and achievement. If you achieve a meaningful life, then you can find

happiness. Perhaps that is why only after we have wished everyone a Shana tova we can begin saying Chag Sameach on



Sukkot. The word 'good' has meaning in the Torah also. When G-d created the world after each day, He said it was 'good'. Also, when He finished His work, He said 'And behold, it was very good.' The Parshanim explain that the word 'good' means that everything was what it

was meant to be. A good year, a shanah tovah, is far more meaningful than a happy one. S h a n a Tovah!

## Suits n' Sneakers

Netanel Amos Grade 8



Why can't we wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur? The simplest reason (and yet the most important) is that the Torah tells us to refrain from five physical pleasures: eating or

drinking, wearing leather footwear, bathing or washing, applying ointment, lotions, or creams and engaging in any form of spousal intimacy. This is our way to show that we are limiting our physical pleasures and focusing on the spiritual, as we are like Malachim on Yom Kippur.

On a deeper level R' Hirsch, and a number of other commentators, associate the prohibition against wearing leather shoes on Yom Kippur with the prohibition against wearing shoes in the Temple, arguing that on Yom Kippur the entire

earth is sanctified and is akin to the Temple and we are therefore required to walk barefoot. So when you look at your feet you will be reminded just how holy this day truly is!

### **OUR SAGES SAY...**

*Our Sages tell us that it is a Mitzvah to eat Erev Yom Kippur and that one that eats on Erev Yom Kippur gets rewarded as if he fasted two days in a row! There are therefore people who have a candy with them at all times Erev Yom Kippur.*

## **A Day to Return**

Marcus Rehany Grade 8

Yom Kippur marks the day when the entire Jewish Nation of Israel was forgiven for the grave sin of the golden calf. On that very first Yom Kippur, Moshe came down with the second set of luchot (tablets). This sin was



erased and the eternal connection between Hashem and the Jewish People was renewed. Each year Hashem gives

us the ability to do teshuvah (repentance), which is a gift! He forgives us from all the sins that we've committed and we all get to start off with a clean slate. There are different stages of teshuvah:

-Regret: acknowledging that a mistake was made, and feeling regret at having squandered some of our potential.

-Cessation: Talk is cheap, but stopping these sins shows a true commitment to change, and becoming a better person.

-Confession: To make it more "real," we admit our mistake orally, and

ask forgiveness from anyone we may have harmed.

-Resolution: We make a vow not to repeat the harmful action in the future, ever again.

By committing to all of these components we



fulfill the mitzvah of teshuva which brings us closer to Hashem. Even though we fast on Yom Kippur, the fact that we are doing teshuva makes it the happiest day!

# I Promise Not to Promise

Emanuel Bensoussan  
Grade 10



Kol Nidrei is the annulment of vows, the very first prayer we recite on Yom Kippur. If this is simply an annulment of vows, why do we lend so much importance to it?

Especially since we annulled our vows 10 days previous? There are those who have claimed that the reason goes back to the days of the

Spanish Inquisition, when Jews who chose to convert to Christianity rather than face expulsion or death, but remained faithful to Judaism at heart would gather on Yom Kippur eve in their hidden synagogues. Before beginning the Yom Kippur services, they pleaded with G-d to forgive them for all the public statements they made in the previous year which were contrary to Jewish beliefs.

On a deeper level, Kol Nidrei is more than a technical vow-annulment prayer. Rather, by releasing our vows, we

are asking G-d to reciprocate in kind. In the event that He has pledged not to bring the redemption just yet, in the event that He made



an oath to bring harsh judgments on His people in the following year, we ask that He release these vows and instead grant us a year of happiness and redemption.

## **Like Angels Above**

Marcus Rehany  
Grade 8

On Yom Kippur we are likened to angels and here is why:

An angel responds to all of Hashem's orders with no questions. We too strive for this level. For one day a year we remove our connection with the material world and tap into a purely spiritual world, just like the angels. Just like angels do not speak too much, we do not speak too much either on Yom

Kippur. Just like angels stand up straight, we stand up straight for most of the tefilla. Just like angels wear white, we wear white. Just like



angels don't eat or drink, we don't eat or drink. The idea that we are like angels has a practical application in Jewish law: typically, the second verse of the Shema, Baruch Shem, is recited quietly. But on Yom Kippur, it is proclaimed aloud, just like the angels do. Yom Kippur cleanses

a human and allows him to restart, spend time with our Creator, start fresh, become a better person, do teshuva, and ultimately, Yom Kippur helps us achieve our ultimate purpose in this world. Wishing you a meaningful Yom Kippur!

**PAY CLOSE  
ATTENTION!**

*During the Repetition  
of the Musaf Amidah,  
how many times does  
the Kohein Gadol go  
to the mikvah?*

# Seder Avodah

Sam Drazin Grade 10

On Yom Kippur, during the repetition of the Amida, we recite the Seder Avodah that took place in the Beit HaMikdash. It is widely considered one of the most difficult tefilot to understand, but also, one of the most important tefilot. Why, then, is it so important to recite the Seder Avodah? There is no specific takanah (decree) by the Chachamim requiring the recital, but, reciting it fulfills the concept of “וּנְשַׁלְמָה פְּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ”,

“And let our lips replace the (sacrificial) bulls”(Hoshea 14:3). The Midrash tells us that when we are not able to offer korbanot, the recital of the Seder Avodah acts as a replacement for the korbanot. This implies that we can be atoned by reciting the Seder Avodah with kavanah. Thus, one who recites the viduy of the Seder



Avodah with kavanah will be atoned, just like the Kohen

Gadol who received an atonement through reciting the viduy.



Different korbanot were offered to atone for different sins, but the greatest atonement was accomplished by the goat sent to Azazel which atoned for all the sins of the Jewish people. This doesn't necessarily mean that one can be atoned without doing any teshuva, because the Gemara

in Shvuos 13a says, that Yom Kippur's kaparah is only effective for those who do teshuva. One who does complete teshuva, through stopping to do the sin, making a decision to never do the sin again, and reciting viduy will be forgiven. One might ask if this means he will ever be punished for his sins? For more serious sins, he will be cleansed in Olam HaZeh, but someone who repented his sins in Olam HaZeh, is guaranteed no punishment in Olam HaBah (Rambam, Hilchot Teshuva 1:3-4).

## Bend N' Bow

Gaby Mamane 9B

Have you ever wondered why you bow all the way to the floor when you say Aleinu on Yom Kippur? If you read on, you will find out, but first, an introduction with some history. The אשכנזי custom on יום כיפור is to bow until the floor when Aleinu is said, at "ואנחנו", "משתחוים ומודים", and on the three times we say וידוי. The ספרדי custom is not to bow until the floor during Aleinu, rather to kneel all the way when the passage "והכוהנים" is pronounced. At

the time of the Beit HaMikdash, when the Kohen Gadol would pronounce the holy Name of Hashem, the



entire nation would bow all the way down. Now that the Beit HaMikdash is destroyed, we bow down all the way, remembering the glory of the Beit HaMikdash, and mourning that we cannot have the merit to have a Kohen Gadol and for him to say the Divine Name in front of all the people, and through this

we might be able to correct ourselves and the Beit HaMikdash will be built speedily in our days.

## A Fishy Situation

Eliana Rohr & Danielle  
Levi Gr.11

Every year, on the Mincha of yom Kippur we read about the story of Yonah. An unusual sefer about a navi who runs away from Hashem, a big fish who swallows him for 3 days and nights and an evil city who does complete teshuva. Has it ever occurred to you why we read this story on

Yom Kippur? One of the main ideas expressed throughout Sefer Yonah is repentance and teshuva, a central theme of Yom Kippur.



In Yonah we read about how Yona is sent to Ninveh by Hashem telling them to repent, because Hashem has decreed upon the place total destruction. However, once Ninveh

heard about what was going to happen to them they instantaneously stop doing bad, repent and do teshuva. Due to this, Hashem's decree was taken away and Ninveh



was saved. This idea taken from Sefer Yonah can inspire us for Yom Kippur. Just as Hashem had mercy on the people of Ninveh and did teshuva, so to we as the sons and daughters of Hashem turn from our wrongdoings and do teshuva wholeheartedly,

Hashem will change our decree for the better. Another reason as to why we read Sefer Yonah on Yom Kippur is because in the story of Yonah we see that Yonah believes that if he runs away to Tarshish he will be running away from his duties to Hashem as well. We then see that Yonah gets onto a boat that gets caught in a storm sent from Hashem. The passengers on the boat then have a lottery and the final decision is to throw Yonah into the ocean. Yonah then gets swallowed by a large fish. In the stomach of the fish Yonah prays to Hashem

to save him, and when Hashem releases Yonah from within the fish, he finally does what Hashem asked of him. From this story we learn that you could never run away from Hashem or from what Hashem is asking from us. Every single one of us has a mission in life that we must complete. Though it may take a while to realize, and sometimes it may be tough to accomplish, we have to persevere and fulfill the mission that we were brought here to do. This is an inspiring story with great messages and lessons to learn from, as

well as it is a great way to learn how to start on a good page with Hashem and how to have a successful year.

**PAY CLOSE  
ATTENTION!**

*What is Different about  
the Neilah Amidah and  
the four previous  
Amidahs?*

**Last Call- Neila at  
a Glance**

Talia Dayan Grade 8

Neila means closing the gates. During the prayer of Neila we turn to Hashem accepting that

our future is about to be sealed. This is the time to ask Hashem to seal us in The Book of Life and to give us a year full of happiness and health, to succeed in our studies and to guide us toward Torah and mitzvot. Right after the Neilah prayer, Hashem closes his books and our future has been chosen and the Gates of Heaven are shut and harder to penetrate. The Neilah prayer ends with a passionate recitation of "Shema Israel", we then recite "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever" and after that we say, "G-d - He is the

Only G-d" seven times. The shofar is then blown for one long sound and the prayer of Neila is over. We then start singing: L'shana haba b'Yerushalaim, "Next year in Jerusalem", we pray that next year we will be in Yerushalayim with the rebuilding of the Bet Hamikdash!



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**GMAR CHATIMAH  
TOVAH! WISHING  
YOU A MEANINGFUL  
FAST AND A JOYOUS  
& HEALTHY 5776!**

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