

# Guide to Yom Kippur and Spiritual Cleansing

## Level: Basic

Yom Kippur is probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Many Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, fast and/or attend synagogue services on this day.

Yom Kippur occurs on the 10th day of Tishri. The holiday is instituted at Leviticus 23:26 et seq.

The name "Yom Kippur" means "Day of Atonement" and that pretty much explains what the holiday is. It is a day set aside to "afflict the soul," to atone for the sins of the past year. In Days of Awe, the "books" in which G-d inscribes all of our names was mentioned. On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in these books is sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.

As noted in Days of Awe, Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and G-d, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, one must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs committed against them if possible. That must all be done before Yom Kippur.

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm>

## THE ANNUAL OPPORTUNITY

Yom Kippur is about stopping the "I can't(s)" and becoming an "I can" person. It is the day when we cast away the mistakes that define our limitations. On Yom Kippur, we affirm: "These mistakes are not me. It was merely a temporary lapse in judgment. I won't do it again. I can achieve greater and bigger. I only have to try."

King David tells us: "[God] opens His hand and gives to all those who want" (Psalm 145:16). In truth, we can do whatever we want. The only condition is that we have to "want." If we don't want, then G-d cannot give.

In the secular world, dreams are for Mary Poppins and Snow White. They are laughed at, ridiculed and patronized. As we grow older, we categorize dreams as fantasy and fairy tales. The "real world," we are told, is far more brutal.

Yom Kippur is a time to return; a time to dream again the wildest of dreams and to plan their execution; a time to rethink and regain our refreshing hope in life.

[http://www.aish.com/hhYomK/hhYomKDefault/Dreams\\_and\\_Limitations.asp](http://www.aish.com/hhYomK/hhYomKDefault/Dreams_and_Limitations.asp)

The idea of Yom Kippur is that once a year we must start new/start fresh. The only way for us to progress is to take a look at our lives and determine what does not work and fix it. Just like Yom Kippur is a time to return, so too is the *Shemittah* year. The only way for the land to continue to grow is to start new and allow it to lay fallow as it was in the beginning.

