

# High Holidays

## part two

A Summary of Holiday Laws in a Clear and Simple Style

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## ❖ Erev Yom Kippur- The Day Preceding Yom Kippur

### Mitzvah to Eat

There is a Torah obligation to eat and drink on Erev Yom Kippur<sup>1</sup>.

- This obligation applies to men, women<sup>2</sup> and children over bar/bas mitzvah<sup>3</sup>.
- A significant fleishige (meat) meal called the seudah hamafsekkes is eaten in the late afternoon before the fast begins<sup>4</sup>. See ❖ **Seudah Hamafsekkes** later in this pamphlet for more details.
  - Some have a custom to eat a fleishige meal earlier in the day as well.<sup>5</sup>

### Changes in Prayers

- On Erev Yom Kippur, very few selichos are recited.
- In the morning, the following prayers are omitted from shacharis: *mizmor lesoda*, *tachanun*, *lamnatzeyach*<sup>6</sup> and *avinu malkeinu*<sup>7</sup>.

### General Preparations

- Most Yom Kippur prayers are not found in an ordinary siddur but rather in a book called a machzor. This is a siddur especially formulated for the holidays and it is published in a number of different formats and styles. Taking the time to find one that appeals to you can make all the difference for meaningful Yom Kippur prayers. Consult with someone knowledgeable to ensure that the one you choose follows the customs of your tradition or synagogue (e.g. Ashkenaz, Sefard, Ari or Eidut Hamizrach).
- As the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah climax, it is incumbent upon us to make amends for what we have done wrong. Hashem only forgives interpersonal sins if the injured party also grants forgiveness and it is essential for people to seek forgiveness from each other. An injured person who is approached by someone with apparent regrets should endeavor to be forgiving. Measure for measure, one who is forgiving, will receive mercy from Hashem.<sup>8</sup>
- All married men - even those who do not have deceased close relatives - should be sure to have a 24 hour ("yahrtzeit") candle. It is lit before Yom Kippur.
- Married men will be wearing a "kittel" throughout all the Yom Kippur prayers. This simple article of clothing is similar to a robe and is often made from white, broadcloth material. It can be purchased in any Jewish bookstore.
- If there is time, looking over the Yom Kippur prayers is quite worthwhile. Two particular prayers one may want to look at are Viduy and the rendition of the Kohein Gadol's service in the Beis Hamikdosh (found in the chazzan's repetition of mussaf)

### Kapparos

Kapparos is an ancient custom that involves a live chicken or a monetary substitute that symbolically serves as atonement. More on the custom's procedure and its prayer can be found in a machzor.<sup>9</sup>

- When using money, kapparos is usually performed on Erev Yom Kippur. If a chicken is used, it is often performed with a synagogue or group sometime between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

### Mikvah

Men and boys use the mikvah today<sup>10</sup>.

- Ideally, this should be done before praying mincha<sup>11</sup>.
- Someone who finds it difficult to use the mikvah should consult a rabbi for a possible alternative<sup>12</sup>.

### Mincha

Mincha is recited prior to the **Seudah Hamafsekkes**<sup>13</sup> and it is scheduled earlier than usual.

- It is proper to be dressed in Shabbos clothing when praying mincha.<sup>14</sup>

- At the conclusion of the individual Shmoneh Esrei, the **Viduy**- Confession is recited.<sup>15</sup> It is recommended to bring a machzor for this reason. (Rules for this prayer are detailed below in ❖ **Yom Kippur Prayers**)
- It is customary to give much charity before mincha<sup>16</sup> and many synagogues have charity plates set out for this purpose. Some people do **Kapparos** at this time.

### Seudah Hamafsekes- The Dividing Meal

There is an obligation to eat a festive meal before Yom Kippur begins. It is extremely important that this meal is concluded well before sunset.<sup>17</sup>

- Dairy is not eaten during the Seudah Hamafsekes.<sup>18</sup>
- In general, the Seudah Hamafsekes consists of light, easily digestible foods. (For example, chicken is served instead of beef.)<sup>19</sup> One also must be careful not to overeat.<sup>20</sup>
- Some have a custom to eat *kreplach* (meat-filled dumplings) during this meal.
- One who does not want to accept the fast with the conclusion of the meal should preferably express this intent before reciting Birchas Hamazon.<sup>21</sup>

### Final Preparations

- Our homes are cleaned, the beds made and the tables are covered with tablecloths in honor of Yom Kippur.<sup>22</sup>
- Clean, respectable Shabbos clothing is worn on Yom Kippur.<sup>23</sup> It is inappropriate to wear flashy jewelry or clothes during this solemn day.<sup>24</sup>
- Fathers (and in some communities, mothers as well,) bless their children during this time.<sup>25</sup> The texts for these blessings can be found in a machzor.
- It is customary to light yahrtzeit candles in memory of deceased close relatives<sup>26</sup>.
- In addition, all married men light a 24 hour ("yahrtzeit") candle as a *ner habari* (this is a Kabbalistic concept). If the flame from the *ner habari* extinguished prematurely, it should be relit after Yom Kippur and burned all the way down.<sup>27</sup>
  - In some communities, these candles are lit at the synagogue in a random order so that it is not apparent whose candle is whose.<sup>28</sup>
- In every home, a 24 hour ("yahrtzeit") candle should be lit with the intent of using it for havdalah at the conclusion of Yom Kippur.<sup>29</sup>
  - Tip: Many yahrtzeit candles do not last until after Yom Kippur. To extend a candle's life, add some olive oil to it before lighting.
- Candles are lit before Yom Kippur as they are lit before Shabbos. Their appropriate blessings are in the machzor.<sup>30</sup>
  - Women who have the custom to recite a Shehechyanu blessing when lighting candles do not repeat it with the congregation during Kol Nidrei<sup>31</sup>.
- Although Yom Kippur automatically begins at sunset, there is obligation to accept the holiday with all of its restrictions at least a couple of minutes before then.<sup>32</sup>
  - Men accept this while reciting the prayer *tefilas zakah* at the synagogue (see ❖ **Yom Kippur Prayers**).
  - Women accept this during candle lighting.
    - If accepting Yom Kippur at this time poses a difficulty, a woman must verbally stipulate that she does not want to accept Yom Kippur with candle lighting.<sup>33</sup>

In this case, she does not recite a Shehechyanu when lighting the candles. In addition, she must make a conscious acceptance of Yom Kippur a few minutes before sunset.<sup>34</sup>

### Kittel and Tallis

Married men wear a kittel (see ❖ **Erev Yom Kippur** above) and a tallis over their clothes throughout all of the Yom Kippur prayers.<sup>35</sup>

- Customs vary whether a kittel is worn by someone who is within the period of mourning.<sup>36</sup>
- The tallis is put on before Kol Nidrei. Its blessing is recited when putting it on as long as it is still before sunset<sup>37</sup>.
- The following laws apply whenever a tallis or kittel are worn:
  - The tallis and kittel are removed before entering a bathroom.<sup>38</sup>
  - A tallis that was deliberately removed with the intent of using it again a short while later (such as in order to use the bathroom) does not require a blessing when it is replaced.<sup>39</sup>
  - If a tallis completely slipped off one's body, some opinions require a new blessing when replacing it.<sup>40</sup>
- On Yom Kippur, most synagogues have a break. If the tallis was removed at that time, its blessing is usually required when replacing it. The only instance in which the blessing is unnecessary is if the tallis was removed for less than 2-3 hours and one remained awake throughout that time.<sup>41</sup>

### ❖ Yom Kippur Restrictions

On Yom Kippur, it is prohibited to eat or drink; unnecessarily wash any part of the body; apply creams or oils to the body; wear leather shoes; and have marital relations.<sup>42</sup> In addition, all activities that are forbidden on Shabbos are forbidden on Yom Kippur as well.<sup>43</sup>

- Any Yom Kippur prohibition is violated to aid a life that is at risk<sup>44</sup>.
- All of the restrictions apply to men and women over bar/bas mitzvah<sup>45</sup>.
- These obligations begin before sunset the night leading into Yom Kippur<sup>46</sup> and conclude the following night no less than fifty minutes after sunset (for those living in North America)<sup>47</sup>.

### Eating and Drinking

It is forbidden to eat or drink even the smallest amount of food on Yom Kippur<sup>48</sup>.

- One who is sick, weak, or needs to take medication should consult a rabbi (preferably before Yom Kippur if the need is anticipated).
- One may not rinse out his or her mouth on Yom Kippur<sup>49</sup>.
- Children are trained to keep a partial fast.
  - The appropriate age to begin this fast is nine years old for physically healthy children, and ten years old for weak children.<sup>50</sup>
  - The partial fast regimen is as follows: It begins the same time as for adults, continuing throughout the night. For the first year of the regimen, breakfast is eaten an hour later than usual, for the second year of the regimen, two hours later and so on.<sup>51</sup>
  - In all circumstances, a child that is extremely hungry or thirsty may break the fast immediately.<sup>52</sup>

### Washing

It is forbidden to wash any part of one's body on Yom Kippur.

- Children over the age of nine must also be taught to restrict washing themselves<sup>53</sup>.
- There are instances when washing is permitted which are detailed below. Please note that even in these circumstances it is forbidden to use hot tap water<sup>54</sup>, bar soap<sup>55</sup> or the aid of absorbent materials<sup>56</sup> (such as a washcloth or sponge).

- It is permitted to wash away dirt but the washing must be limited to the affected area. If the dirt is spread out, the general area may be washed.<sup>57</sup>
- Washing for a significant medical need is allowed.<sup>58</sup>
- In the morning, hands are washed in the usual alternating manner but only up to the joints where fingers attach to the palm.<sup>59</sup> The usual blessing is not recited until after one washes from using the bathroom.<sup>60</sup>
- A kohen's hands are washed before reciting the priestly blessings. This may be done up until his wrists.<sup>61</sup>
- One who is washing food for a child does not need to worry about inadvertently getting his or her hands wet.<sup>62</sup>

### Leather Shoes

On Yom Kippur, it is forbidden to wear footwear that contains leather.<sup>63</sup> This is true whether the leather is part of the sole, upper, or strap.

- Leather inserts that are necessary for a medical reason are permitted<sup>64</sup>.
- Children over the age of nine must be taught to keep this restriction<sup>65</sup>.
  - In addition, adults may not assist nor encourage children of any age to wear leather footwear<sup>66</sup>. If a young child puts one on by himself, it does not need to be removed<sup>67</sup>.

### Applying Creams or Oils

On Yom Kippur, it is forbidden to spread oils, alcohol, lotions, creams or perfumes on any part the body<sup>68</sup>.

(Note that even without this prohibition most creams and lotions cannot be spread during Shabbos or Yom Tov.<sup>69</sup>)

- This restriction prohibits applying deodorant or anti-perspirant.
- There is nothing wrong with applying these items on the body before Yom Kippur even though they will remain there during the holiday.
- In instances of a medical need, one must consult a rabbi (preferably before the holiday)<sup>70</sup>.

### Marital Relations

Marital relations are forbidden on Yom Kippur. All associated familial limitations that apply when a woman is a niddah are in effect throughout Yom Kippur.<sup>71</sup>

## ❖ Yom Kippur Prayers

Following, are laws that pertain to some of the unique prayers that are said on Yom Kippur:

### Personal Requests

It is always appropriate to make personal requests during *Shmoneh Esrei* (the Amidah) and on Yom Kippur, this is especially true. The correct place to insert them is towards the end of *Shmoneh Esrei* just before the final verse of "Y'hyu l'ratzon imrei fee..."- "May the expressions of my mouth...". (This is the same place where many have a custom to insert verses pertaining to one's name.) The requests should be said with sincerity and they may be said in any language<sup>72</sup>.

### Viduy - Confession

There is a Torah commandment to confess sins on Yom Kippur and the viduy text is the vehicle through which this is done.<sup>73</sup> It contains alphabetical lists of sins that span improper thoughts, speech and deeds and as each sin is mentioned, one lightly taps the chest with his or her right fist.

- One's thoughts during viduy are to be on regret for each wrong as it is mentioned.<sup>74</sup>

- While reciting viduy, all who are physically-able stand without leaning on anything. It is also proper to be in a slightly bowed position until after the list of sins is mentioned<sup>75</sup>.
- The viduy text must be understood in order fulfill the obligation properly. Any additional sins that one is aware of should be mentioned (in any language) after those in the text.<sup>76</sup>

### Tefilas Zakah - A Prayer of Purity

This prayer is recited before Kol Nidrei. Since it is not recited as a congregation, it is often not listed on the synagogue's schedule.

Tefilas Zakah is not short and it can be quite intimidating. At the very least one should be sure to verbalize (even in his or her own words) two important aspects that it contains:

1. To forgive anyone and everyone that may have wronged you
  2. To voluntarily begin the Yom Kippur holiday a little earlier than sunset (after sunset, Yom Kippur is in effect regardless – see above ❖**Erev Yom Kippur - Final Preparations**).
- Between Tefilas Zakah and Kol Nidrei, many synagogues have the custom that all the Torah scrolls are carried through the synagogue by venerated leaders of the community. All who are in proximity kiss each scroll as it passes by and ask Hashem for forgiveness for violating the Torah's honor<sup>77</sup>.

### Boruch Shem

After the first verse of Sh'ma we recite the statement: "*Boruch shem k'vod malchuso l'olam va'ed*, Blessed is His great name for all eternity". Although throughout the year this phrase is recited quietly, on Yom Kippur it is said out loud<sup>78</sup>.

### Selichos

Throughout Yom Kippur prayers, many additional prayers called selichos are recited. It is more virtuous to recite fewer of these with understanding and meaning than to say more of them rushed and thoughtlessly. Those who cannot recite all of them should ask someone knowledgeable to show them which ones should be given priority.

### Ne'ilah

The Ten Days of Penitence climax with Yom Kippur and Yom Kippur climaxes with Ne'ilah. This intense prayer is our final chance to affect the judgment of the coming year<sup>79</sup>. The ark is opened throughout the chazzan's repetition<sup>80</sup> and it is ideal to remain standing while the ark is opened<sup>81</sup>.

- It is particularly appropriate to cry during ne'ilah prayers<sup>82</sup>.

## ❖ Yom Kippur Conclusion

Technically, Yom Kippur concludes at nightfall but there is an obligation to wait a few moments after nightfall before reciting havdalah and resuming normal weekday activity<sup>83</sup>.

- Yom Kippur is a Biblical obligation and it is proper to err on the side of caution regarding when nightfall is determined. Therefore, although in North America, one may safely assume that nightfall is fifty minutes after sunset it is virtuous to wait until after seventy-two minutes have passed.<sup>84</sup>
- After ma'ariv prayers, kiddush levanah is recited if the moon is visible<sup>85</sup>. Men should ideally leave their kittel and tallis on while reciting it<sup>86</sup>.

### Havdalah

Havdalah is recited over a cup of wine or grape juice at the conclusion of Yom Kippur.

- Although general eating and drinking remain prohibited until after listening to havdalah, drinking water is permitted.<sup>87</sup> (This rule is applicable anytime that havdalah is recited.)
- If bread is on the table that will be eaten immediately following havdalah, it must be covered - similar to what is done for Kiddush<sup>88</sup>. (This is also applicable whenever havdalah is recited.)

- Since this year Yom Kippur falls on a weekday, its procedure is as follows:
  - The introductory phrases are omitted and one begins with the blessing of *Ha'gafen*<sup>89</sup>.
  - The blessing over spices is skipped.<sup>90</sup>
  - The blessing over fire is recited only if a fire that had been burning throughout Yom Kippur is available.<sup>91</sup> (A flame that was lit using such a fire is also acceptable<sup>92</sup>.)
  - The final blessing *hamavdil bein kodesh lechol* is recited and the wine is drunk.
- If at least three ounces of wine have been drunk, the after-blessing *al hagefen* is recited. This is true even if a bread meal is about to begin<sup>93</sup>.
  - The only exception to this rule is if more wine will be drunk during the meal. Then, no *al hagefen* is said.<sup>94</sup>
  - One who forgot to recite the *al hagefen* and already started to eat a bread meal should intend that the Birchas Hamazon after the meal cover the wine as well.<sup>95</sup>
- A celebratory fleishige Yom Tov meal is eaten after Yom Kippur<sup>96</sup>. (This does not have to be the break-fast).
- It is customary to build the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur.

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### אשירה לד' כי גמל עלי

I am indebted to my wife for all the patience and support she continues to have for me.

Thank you my dear reader, for without your interest this pamphlet would not exist.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to be a quick review of some pertinent laws relevant to this time of year.

It was formulated for those who do not have the opportunity or resources to study the laws in detail.

Many of these laws and sources are from the seforim:

שליט"א by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Karp הלכות חג בחג

קונטרס שיעורי הלכה מתוך שיעורים של רב שמואל פעלדער

Please share your feedback with me at [timelytorah@gmail.com](mailto:timelytorah@gmail.com)

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Tishrei 5776

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- <sup>1</sup> Shulchan Aruch 604:1 See Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>2</sup> See Hilchos Chag B'chag chapter 21 note 17  
<sup>3</sup> Shulchan Aruch 604:1 See Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>4</sup> Shulchan Aruch 608  
<sup>5</sup> Mishna Berura 608:16  
<sup>6</sup> Shulchan Aruch and Rema 604:2  
<sup>7</sup> Rema 604:2  
<sup>8</sup> See Shulchan Aruch 606:4 Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>9</sup> Shulchan Aruch 605  
<sup>10</sup> Shulchan Aruch 606:4  
<sup>11</sup> Mishna Berura 606:18  
<sup>12</sup> Rema 606:4 Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>13</sup> Shulchan Aruch 607:1  
<sup>14</sup> Mateh Efrayim 607:1  
<sup>15</sup> Shulchan Aruch 607:1  
<sup>16</sup> Mateh Efrayim 607:1  
<sup>17</sup> Shulchan Aruch 608:1  
<sup>18</sup> Rema 608:4  
<sup>19</sup> Shulchan Aruch and Rema 608:4 Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>20</sup> Elyah Rabba 608:9  
<sup>21</sup> Mishna Berura 608:15  
<sup>22</sup> Rema 610:4; Mateh Efrayim 610:7  
<sup>23</sup> Rema 610:4  
<sup>24</sup> Mishna Berura 610:16  
<sup>25</sup> Mateh Efrayim 619:2  
<sup>26</sup> Rema 610:4  
<sup>27</sup> Rema 610:4 Mishna Berura 610:11  
<sup>28</sup> Mishna Berura 610:14  
<sup>29</sup> Mishna Berura 624:13  
<sup>30</sup> Rema 610:2  
<sup>31</sup> Sha'ar Hatziyun 619:7  
<sup>32</sup> Shulchan Aruch 608:1  
<sup>33</sup> Mateh Efrayim 610:5  
<sup>34</sup> See Mishbetzos Zahav 608:1  
<sup>35</sup> Rema 610:4  
<sup>36</sup> Mishna Berura 610:18  
<sup>37</sup> Mishna Berura 619:4  
<sup>38</sup> Mishna Berura 21:14; see Shiurey Halacha of Rabbi Shmuel Felder  
<sup>39</sup> Mishna Berura 8:37  
<sup>40</sup> Shulchan Aruch 8:15  
<sup>41</sup> See Shiurey Halacha of Rabbi Shmuel Felder

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- <sup>42</sup> Shulchan Aruch 611:1  
<sup>43</sup> Shulchan Aruch 611:2  
<sup>44</sup> Mateh Efrayim 611:6; see Shulchan Aruch 328 and 618;  
<sup>45</sup> Shulchan Aruch 616:2  
<sup>46</sup> Shulchan Aruch 611:1  
<sup>47</sup> Igros Moshe Volume 4 #62 (page 94)  
<sup>48</sup> Shulchan Aruch 612:5  
<sup>49</sup> Rema 613:4  
<sup>50</sup> Shulchan Aruch and Rema 616:2 see Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>51</sup> Shulchan Aruch 616:2  
<sup>52</sup> Children in Halacha Chapter 24 A1  
<sup>53</sup> Rema 616:2  
<sup>54</sup> Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 14:4  
<sup>55</sup> Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 14:18  
<sup>56</sup> Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 14:15  
<sup>57</sup> Mishna Berura 613:1  
<sup>58</sup> Mishna Berura 613:10  
<sup>59</sup> Shulchan Aruch 613:2  
<sup>60</sup> See Mishna Berura 554:21  
<sup>61</sup> Rema 613:3 Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>62</sup> See Mishna Berura 554:19  
<sup>63</sup> Shulchan Aruch 614:2  
<sup>64</sup> Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasa 39:37  
<sup>65</sup> Rema 616:2  
<sup>66</sup> Shulchan Aruch 616:1  
<sup>67</sup> Mishna Berura 343:3  
<sup>68</sup> Shulchan Aruch 614:1  
<sup>69</sup> See Shulchan Aruch 314:11, Shulchan Aruch 328:26 and Mishna Berura there  
<sup>70</sup> See Shulchan Aruch 614:1 and 327; Shmiras Shabbos Khilchasa (new) 39:35  
<sup>71</sup> Shulchan Aruch 615:1 Mishna Berura ad loc.  
<sup>72</sup> Mishna Berura 122:8  
<sup>73</sup> Rambam Hilchos Teshuvah 2:7  
<sup>74</sup> See Hilchos Chag B'chag 21 note 93  
<sup>75</sup> Shulchan Aruch 607:3 Mishna Berura 607:10  
<sup>76</sup> Shulchan Aruch 607:2; see Chayei Adam 143:1  
<sup>77</sup> Mateh Efrayim 619:10  
<sup>78</sup> Shulchan Aruch 619:2  
<sup>79</sup> Mishna Berura 623:3  
<sup>80</sup> Mishna Berura 637:7  
<sup>81</sup> See Igros Moshe Orach Chayim volume 5, 38:4  
<sup>82</sup> Hilchos Chag B'chag 27:88

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- <sup>83</sup> Shulchan Aruch 624:2  
<sup>84</sup> Igros Moshe Orach Chayim Volume 4 #62 (page 94)  
<sup>85</sup> Rema 426:2  
<sup>86</sup> Mateh Efrayim 624:4  
<sup>87</sup> Shulchan Aruch 299:1  
<sup>88</sup> Shulchan Aruch 299:9  
<sup>89</sup> Mateh Efrayim 624:5  
<sup>90</sup> Shulchan Aruch 624:3  
<sup>91</sup> Biur Halacha 624 "V'yeish Omrim"  
<sup>92</sup> Rema 624:5  
<sup>93</sup> See V'zos Habracha page 84  
<sup>94</sup> See Mishna Berura 299:26 and 174:8  
<sup>95</sup> See V'zos Habracha page 84  
<sup>96</sup> Rema 624:5