



## Things to Do:

- ▶ Reflect on how you may have hurt others, and ask their forgiveness.
- ▶ Graciously forgive others.
- ▶ Donate the money you would not spend on meals on Yom Kippur to a charity that provides food for people who are poor.
- ▶ Focus on one personal quality that needs improvement and how you can change it.
- ▶ Visit people who are elderly, ill, or grieving, and help provide for the needs of the homeless.
- ▶ Refuse to stand idly by when others are in trouble.
- ▶ In a world of gossip, be careful and sensitive with speech.

# Yom Kippur



Although the “Gates of Repentance” are always open, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is a day of especially intense reflection – feeling regretful about mistakes we made in the previous year, ceasing to continue our mistakes, and resolving to improve during the new year.

In his book *The Jewish Way*, Rabbi Irving Greenberg offers profound insight: “The power of sin – of bad patterns – is that it convinces people that change is impossible. People despair of their ability to change and give up the capacity to grow or renew. The promise of repentance and the model of G-d challenge this hopelessness. There is a process of rebirth, but it needs attention, effort, and help.”

Even though *Yom Kippur* is a day of praying and fasting, the reading from the prophet Isaiah (chapter 58) on this day emphatically proclaims that G-d does not want our prayers and fasts unless they are accompanied by pursuing justice, feeding the hungry, taking care of the homeless, and other acts of loving kindness.

One important Jewish belief is that in order for G-d to forgive us for sins we have committed against others, we must first ask forgiveness from people we have hurt. Therefore, in the days before *Yom Kippur*, it is traditional to seek out people we have offended and ask their forgiveness – and we must also be gracious in forgiving others who have hurt us.

*Yom Kippur* is a solemn day, but it is also a day filled with hope, and even joy, according to the Talmud. Why? Because if we have observed the holiday properly, we have made peace with the people we know, and with G-d. We are then able to feel a deep sense of serenity and a genuine sense of renewal.



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