

# Yom Kippur 5776

Special Edition



22/23 September 2015 - 10 Tishrei 5776

Shacharis 5:00am & 7:30am

Yom Kippur Mincha: 3:15pm

Nida: (approx) 5:00pm

Fast Ends 6:35pm

Latest time for morning Shema this week: 8:53am

Earliest time for evening Shema this week: 6:34pm



## Taking Responsibility For Our Lives

People sometimes view Yom Kippur as a day of somber doom and gloom, full of long unintelligible praying, physical deprivations, and fears and anxieties about the future. Yet our Sages view Yom Kippur in quite a different light.

The Mishna in Masechet Ta'anit (26b) tells us that Yom Kippur was one of the two most joyous days of the Jewish year (the other being the 15th of Av, as explained there). Yom Kippur is a day of forgiveness, reconciliation and opportunity for a new beginning, unencumbered by the crushing deadweight of past failure. Yom Kippur is a wondrous gift of love from the Creator, the gift of a second chance. As such, despite the lengthy prayers and the physical discomfort of no food or drink, and our backs, knees and feet being sore from long hours of standing, one should cherish every moment "like the sweetness of honey" (an expression I heard from my revered Mashgiach Rav Dovid Kronglass, zatzal). For an all too brief 25-hour period we are with G-d, in Whose presence there is "strength & joy" (Chronicles I 16:27).



If a blind person were given one day in which to see, what would he do? How he would rush to savor the memory of color, of pattern, to notice the green of the grass, the colors of flowers, the smiles of his children. How he would hold on to everything he could see so he could imprint it on his mind and soul and consciousness, even as the physical image fades away. This last hour of Yom Kippur, as we say the Ne'ilah prayer, is very much the same. We spend most of our lives only half-seeing. If not blind, then we are at least color-blind, missing so much of the essence. On Yom Kippur, when we really focus, we can begin to see. On this day the Shechina (Divine Presence) is particularly close and the gates of Heaven are open to our prayers. But toward the end of the day that time is ending, and we will go back to our regular life, our life of half-seeing. The prayer of Ne'ilah is shorter than the rest of the Yom Kippur prayers. There are no longer "al chets". We are pressed for time and we are pushing to get those last few requests in. We are trying and striving to hold on to the special moments when G-d is closer to us than at any other time of the year, to remember them so we can continue to keep some of the holiness within us.

And teshuva can be earned in a moment if we do it right. The gemara in Avoda Zara (17a) relates the story of Elazar ben Dordaya who was a notoriously degenerate person. He was so degenerate that he traveled the world looking for prostitutes. Finally he heard of one he hadn't been with, far away. He made the trip, but she was so disgusted that he had spent so much effort to find her that she refused to be with him. This woke him up. In an instant he realized what he had become. In despair, he turned to the mountains and hills and asked them to pray for him. They answered him that they couldn't — they had to pray for themselves. Next he turned to the heaven and earth and asked them the same. Again he got the same answer. Next he turned to the sun and moon, and again was turned down. Finally he turned to the stars, and they, too, refused him. At last he cried out that the only one who could save him was himself. All of it was on his shoulders. With this realization he cried such a pitiful cry to G-d that his soul left his body. At that instant a voice from Heaven sounded, "Rabbi Elazar ben Dordaya has earned a share in the World-to-Come." He had been given rabbinic ordination posthumously. When the rabbis of the Talmud told this story they would cry with the realization that in an instant someone could ascend so high-to and acquire his share in the World-to-Come in one minute — and yet so many of us waste so much time. And so many years.

The great Reisher Rav, zatzal (Rabbi Aaron Levine who died in the Holocaust) explains this story further. What is the meaning of Elazar ben Dordaya's dialogue with the elements? What earned him his passage into the next world? He explains that the hills and mountains are often a reference to parents. When Elazar realized what he had become, his first impulse was to look for someone to blame. He called to his parents, as if to say, "It's not my fault. You raised me poorly and that's why I became what I became." But in his heart of hearts he knew the truth. Hearing the echo of his parents' response in his own heightened consciousness, he understood that whatever his parents may have to answer for is between them and G-d, but that he and all of us remain free actors responsible for the life we choose. Next, in his restless, frenetic efforts to find a scapegoat and an excuse, he turned to the heaven and earth, which are symbols of the environment. Perhaps his environment could be blamed — his friends, his society, the predominant culture to which he was exposed. He got the same answer. Next he turned to the sun and moon, which control the crops, and are symbols of economic circumstance. A person

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

# INSIGHTS INTO ‘AL CHET’



## 1. For the mistakes we committed before You under duress and willingly.

How can we be held accountable for mistakes committed under duress?! The answer is that

sometimes, we get into compromising situations because we are not careful. Many of these "accidents" can be avoided by setting limitations to avoid temptation.

## 2. For the mistakes we committed before You through having a hard heart.

Hardening of the heart means that I closed myself off to deep, human emotions like compassion and caring. The newspapers and streets seem so filled with one tragic story after another, that I can become desensitized to the whole idea of human suffering.

## 3. For the mistakes we committed before You without thinking (or without knowledge).

Every day, we should pray to God for the ability to think and reason. A clear mind is integral to our growth and development. If we're riding in a car and staring aimlessly out the window, then for those precious moments we are nothing more than zombies.

## 4. For the mistakes we committed before You through things we blurted out with our lips.

A wise man once said, "You don't have to say everything you think." The Talmud says that when we speak, our lips and teeth should act as "gates," controlling whatever flows out.

## 5. For the mistake we committed before You in public and in private.

## 6. For the mistakes we committed before You through immorality.

## 7. For the mistakes we committed before You through harsh speech.

Speech is the unique human faculty, and is the way we build bridges between each other -- and through prayer, with God. That's why abuse of speech is considered one of the gravest mistakes possible.

## 8. For the mistakes we committed before You with knowledge and deceit.

As we know, knowledge is a powerful tool -- and a dangerous weapon when misused.

## 9. For the mistakes we committed before You through inner thoughts.

The Talmud says that "Bad thoughts are (in one way) even worse than bad deeds." This is because from a spiritual perspective, "thoughts" represent a higher dimension of human activity. ("Thoughts" are rooted in the spiritual world; "deeds" are rooted in the physical world.)

## 10. For the mistakes we committed before You through wronging a friend.

"Friendship" is one of the highest forms of human activity. When we reach out and connect with others, we experience the unity of God's universe, and bring the world closer to perfection.

## 11. For the mistakes we committed before You through insincere confession.

On Yom Kippur when we say each line of the "Al Chet" prayer, we gently strike our heart -- as if to say that it was "passion and desire" that led to these mistakes. Do we really mean it?

## 12. For the mistakes we committed before You while gathering to do negative things.

Engaging in evil as a lone individual is bad enough. But just as the secular courts treat "conspiracy" more seriously, so too God despises the institutionalizing of bad habits.

## 13. For the mistakes we committed before You willfully and unintentionally.

## 14. For the mistakes we committed before You by degrading parents and teachers.

Parents and teachers are our first authority figures in life, and by way of association they teach us how to be respectful toward God and His mitzvot. The breakdown of respect for parents and teachers corrodes the moral core of society.

## 15. For the mistakes we committed before You by exercising power.

God apportions to everyone exactly what they need: whether wealth, intelligence, good fortune, etc. Only when we feel our position is independent of God do we seek to dominate others for our own advantage.

## 16. For the mistakes we committed before You through desecrating God's name.

As a "Light Unto the Nations," every Jew is a messenger of God in this world, responsible to project a positive image.

## 17. For the mistakes we committed before You with foolish speech.

People have a habit of talking for talking's sake. When we're bored, we may get on the phone, and "talk and talk and talk." Don't talk without a purpose. In any conversation ask yourself: "Is there any point to this conversation? Am I learning anything? Am I growing?" If you can't identify the point, there probably is none.

## 18. For the mistakes we committed before You with vulgar speech.

Did you ever find yourself in the middle of a distasteful joke? It can be insidious, but all of a sudden you find yourself dragged into a discussion that has taken a turn for the worse. Learn to switch tracks. Monitor your conversations, and when you notice them slipping off track, pull them back, gently and subtly.

## 19. For the mistakes we committed before You with the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination).

The Yetzer Hara is that little voice inside each of us that tries to convince us to pursue physical comfort, at the expense of greater spiritual pleasures.

## 20. For the mistakes we committed before You against those who know, and those that do not know.

## 21. For the mistakes we committed before You through bribery.

Bribery is most subversive because we are often not aware of how it affects our decisions. In the words of the Torah, bribery is "blinding."

THE YOM KIPPUR SERVICE FEATURES A LONG LIST OF 44 MISTAKES.  
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

## 22. For the mistakes we committed before You through denial and false promises.

The mark of a great person is a meticulous commitment to truth -- despite whatever hardships, embarrassment, or financial loss might be involved.

## 23. For the mistakes we committed before You through negative speech (Loshon Hara).

It is said that big people talk about ideas, medium people talk about places and things, and little people talk about people. Gossip causes quarrel and division amongst people -- and tears apart relationships, families, and even entire communities. As King Solomon said: "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

## 24. For the mistakes we committed before You through being scornful (or scoffing).

## 25. For the mistakes we committed before You in business.

Integrity is the mark of every great person. The Talmud says that the first question a person is asked upon arriving in heaven is: "Did you deal honestly in business?"

## 26. For the mistakes we committed before You with food and drink.

Eating is such an essential human activity, that the rabbis say all of a person's character traits are revealed at the dinner table.

## 27. For the mistakes we committed before You through interest and extortion.

Gaining financial advantage because someone else is destitute shows poor character. That is why the Torah forbids loaning money to another Jew on interest.

## 28. For the mistakes we committed before You by being arrogant.

The trait the Torah uses to describe Moses is "the most humble man." Humility is a key to spiritual growth, because it allows us to make room in our life for other people - and for God.

## 29. For the mistakes we committed before You with eye movements.

Sometimes we can harm others without even saying a word. For instance, the Talmud discusses the illegality of staring into someone else's home or yard.

## 30. For the mistakes we committed before You with endless babbling.

Often we feel uncomfortable with silence, so we fill the time with meaningless chatter. The Torah tells us, however, that more than anywhere, God is found in the sound of silence.

## 31. For the mistakes we committed before You with haughty eyes.

The Talmud says that a person's eyes are the "window to the soul." An arrogant person is therefore referred to as having "haughty eyes."

## 32. For the mistakes we committed before You with a strong forehead (brazenness).

The Talmud says there are three traits which characterize Jews: kindness, compassion and shame. "Shame" means feeling embarrassed and remorseful when doing something wrong.

## 33. For the mistakes we committed before You in throwing off the yoke (i.e. refusing to accept responsibility).

Judaism defines greatness as having a greater degree of responsibility. Deep down this is what every human being wants - hence the excitement over a promotion or raising a family.

## 34. For the mistakes we committed before You in judgment.

The Torah tells us it is a mitzvah to be dan li-kaf zechus -- to judge people favorably. This means, for example, that when someone shows up an hour late, rather than assume they were irresponsible, I should rather try to get all the facts, and in the meantime, imagine that perhaps they were delayed by uncontrollable circumstances.

## 35. For the mistakes we committed before You in entrapping a friend.

## 36. For the mistakes we committed before You through jealousy (lit: "a begrudging eye").

Someone who has a "good eye" will sincerely celebrate the success of others, while someone with an "evil eye" will begrudge the success of others.

## 37. For the mistakes we committed before You through light-headedness.

Sometimes we can forget that life is serious. We're born, and we die. What have we made of our lives? Have we been focused on meaningful goals, or are we steeped in trivial pursuits?

## 38. For the mistakes we committed before You by being stiff-necked.

In the Torah, God refers to the Jewish people as "stiff-necked." This is a positive attribute in the sense that we are not easily swayed by fad and fashion. Yet on the negative side, we can also be unreasonably stubborn.

## 39. For the mistakes we committed before You by running to do evil.

## 40. For the mistakes we committed before You by telling people what others said about them.

## 41. For the mistakes we committed before You through vain oath taking.

One of the Ten Commandments is "not to take God's Name in vain." Integral to our relationship with God is the degree to which we show Him proper respect.

## 42. For the mistakes we committed before You through baseless hatred.

The Talmud tells us that more than any other factor, hatred among Jews has been the cause of our long and bitter exile. Conversely, Jewish unity and true love between us is what will hasten our redemption.

## 43. For the mistakes we committed before You in extending the hand.

## 44. For the mistakes we committed before You through confusion of the heart.

The Sages tell us that ultimately all mistakes stem from a confusion of the heart. This is why on Yom Kippur we tap our chest as we go through this list of "Al Chet's."

Rabbi Shraga Simmons - aish.com

might be led to sin because of poverty, or conversely the pressures of success might be a crushing insurmountable burden. Again he received the same answer. Finally, he turned to the stars, his DNA, as it were, his predetermined characteristics. All these things he looked to blame, and each one refused. Finally, he realized it all lay in his own power. Though parents and environment and economics and inborn traits all weigh on a person, ultimately we have free choice. We are not a product of rigid determinism. This is what Elazer ben Dordaya realized, and in realizing it, he took responsibility for himself. This is what earned him his life in the World-to-Come. He approached G-d with honesty, simplicity and directness. We certainly cannot fool G-d, but we must be careful not to fool ourselves either!

The Maggid of Kelm used to tell a story, a famous parable, in which for one half hour the inhabitants of the city's graveyard were brought back to life for the purpose of fixing what they had not done right in life. He described the frenzy of the dead, rushing from their graves to learn a page of gemara, or to give charity, or to try to make something right with their loved ones. And all the time they had their eyes on the clock. Twenty five minutes left, then only fifteen, finally five, and then the clock strikes, and with a wail the dead are again gone. The Maggid of Kelm would finish by asking his audience, "And my friends, what's so bad if we have more than a half hour? And my friends, who says we have a half hour?"

Life is precious. Opportunities are legion. Let us use the gifts that G-d in His infinite kindness has given us and may we and all of Israel merit a good and sweet year of health, holiness and growth.

### Kol Nidrei Night with the Chafetz Chaim

In the town of Radin, there was a fellow in his fifties who never quite managed to get married. Yom Kippur was a very lonely time for him. In Europe, the Kol Nidrei service would finish well before nine o'clock and people would return to their homes. On Shabbat and Yom Tov, he had lack no of meal invitations, but on Kol Nidrei evening there was no meal to which he could be invited. For this poor fellow it was the loneliest night of the year.

One year on Kol Nidre evening, he was sitting in the shul long after everyone had gone home. He leaned forward, his forehead on his arm, and gently started to weep. After a few moments, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up and found himself looking into the eyes of the Chafetz Chaim. The Chafetz Chaim asked him if he could sit down. He said yes. The Chafetz Chaim proceeded to talk to this fellow about every subject under the sun: His family, the weather. Anything to lighten this fellow's spirits. No subject seemed too trivial for the Chafetz Chaim to speak about.

They spoke for a very long time indeed. In fact they spoke the whole night long. About this. About that. The entire night.

If you or I were to conjecture the Kol Nidrei of the Chafetz Chaim, I doubt that it would include a discussion on the proclivities of the weather. We would picture him immersed in study and teshuva. The barometer of the way we feel about G-d is mirrored in the way we treat people. A lack of sensitivity to the feelings of others shows a lacking, not just in our mitzvot between ourselves and our fellow, but in our mitzvot between ourselves and G-d.

### YOM KIPPUR SCHEDULE 5776

#### TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

Candle lighting:	5.46 pm
Mincha:	1.05, 3.00, 4.00 pm
Tefilah Zakkah:	5.45 pm
Kol Nidrei:	6.00 pm

#### WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

Shachris: Neitz:	5.00am(5.56 am - neitz)
Main Shul	7.30 am
Yizkor: (approx.)	10.45 am
Mincha:	3.15 pm
Neilah: (approx.)	5.00 pm
Fast ends:	6.35 pm

Reminder: Before Yom Tov bring Talleisim for Kol Nidrei. We request that small children not be brought to Shul.  
We wish you all a Gmar Chasima Tova!

Sometimes talking about the weather can be a very great mitzvah indeed.

### BABY BOY

Mazeltof to **Yoni & Meira Bender** on the birth of a baby boy. Mazeltof to proud grandparents **Israel & Avril Bender** and **Jeff & Yaella Lever**.

The community offer sincere condolences to  
**Rabbi Akiva Tatz & Anna-Louise Shapiro**  
on the passing of their mother  
**Minde Tatz z'l**

המקום ינוח אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

### RABBI TZVI SCHWARTZ

MUSSAR FOR SUKKOS  
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