

Dear All,

The following is a short primer to help with the eve of Yom Kippur.

#### Erev Yom Kippur Primer

1. It is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur (Tuesday, October 7th). The Talmud says you get reward for eating on Erev Yom Kippur akin to the reward for fasting on Yom Kippur itself. You might think of this as a way of celebrating the festive aspect of Yom Kippur as a holiday, just on the eve as opposed to the day itself. Please remember to drink plenty of liquid and to cut down on caffeine before the fast.
2. There is a tradition for men to immerse in the mikveh before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This tradition relates to both the laws of ritual purity, and to the idea that Teshuva-Repentance is a full persona process. We use the Mikveh as a transformative step in the process of repentance. No blessing is recited upon immersion. If you fell uncomfortable coming to the Mikveh for reasons related to the pandemic and would like to fulfill this tradition, one can either use Fraser River as your Mikvah, use a pool if it is accessible, or shower for 5-8 minutes with your entire body in the water. These options should only be used when one does not have access to a Mikvah and does not replace the need for a Mikvah for women.
3. There is a custom to do Kapparot (personal atonement ceremony). This ritual was once done with a rooster and chicken. However, for various spiritual and practical reasons (too much work for one Shochet in one day), the common custom is to use money which is then donated to charity. The synagogue will have receptacles available to various causes to which you can direct your charity. You can find the text [here](#)
4. The Mincha Service on Erev Yom Kippur contains a confession of sins. This is done as insurance so that no matter what, you have confessed your sins before the Day of Atonement. The time of services at Schara Tzedek is 2:30 on Sunday afternoon.
5. There is also a strong custom to forgive others for any wrongs they have done to you. Of course there is the collateral custom of asking for forgiveness. There is a beautiful prayer that you can say as you are waiting for Kol Nidre to begin called Tefila Zakah. It is found in the Machzor, on page 38. It contains a text that formally declares forgiveness. Please remember it is often those closest to us that we must ask forgiveness from and to whom we should grant forgiveness.
6. There is a custom for parents to bless their children, young and old, before Yom Kippur. A link to the text of the blessing can be found [here - P32 in the Machzor](#)
7. The Five afflictions or *Inuyim*. These five categories are the formal actions of the most intense fast days of the year. On the 9 of Av they are for mourning, and on Yom Kippur they are the agents of atonement and an attempt to live like angels free from the material needs of this world. They are:
  - a. Eating and drinking is prohibited from sundown to stars out. One who is ill, pregnant or nursing should consult their Rabbi to determine if fasting is required or for an appropriate contingency plan. **Please consult with one of our Rabbis if you are concerned about fasting during the current Covid pandemic.**

- b. Bathing is prohibited except in cases of obvious and obstructive dirt. More to the point, you can wash your hands after the washroom. You can also do the ritual washing of your hands up to the finger joints, as well if your hands or another part of the body gets extra dirty. Sadly, washing the face, or other parts of the body is prohibited.
  - c. Wearing leather shoes; in cases where one might be exposed to danger and protective footwear is required, should consult their Rabbi to determine the right course of action.
  - d. Marital relations including the “Harchakot.” or measures of separation observed during the *Nida* period are also observed. Frankly, this one is too complicated to explain in short or in public. Feel free to inquire further of your Rabbi or Mikveh teacher for more information.
  - e. The use of creams and oils is prohibited. One who has a dermatological issue is likely exempted from this prohibition when using medication, however a consult with a Rabbi is wise.
8. Our practice is to light candles before Yom Kippur. However, there must be at least one member of the household who enjoys the light of the candles. This year Kol Nidre will also be live streamed. If you wish to postpone the official acceptance of the fast until after arrival at Shul, opportunity will be provided to light candles at the synagogue. **If you are participating in Kol Nidre remotely, Remember to light the candles after the Zoom Kol Nidrei service and before the beginning of Yom Kippur (latest time at approx 7 pm).**

One makes the following Beracah:

Baruch ata andonai elohenu melech haolam, asher kidishanu, b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu le'hadlik ner shel Yom hakippurim. (if Yom kippur beigns on a friday night recite “shel Shabbat ve'shel Yom hakippurim”)

and then one recites the Shehechianu blessing.

One should make Havdalah after Yom Kippur. The flame for the havdalah candle should be taken from a candle, or stove pilot, that has been burning throughout Yom Tov. This is called Ner Sheshavat, or a candle that has rested and is meant to reflect the re-engagement with fire after the respite of creative labor or activity on shabbat.

Shana Tova and Gemar Chatima Tova

(A good New Year and may you be sealed in the books for good).

Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt

Rabbi Shlomo Shachter