

THE HOLIDAY EDITION
For grades 3-5



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What do you know about Yom Kippur?
We fast.
We spend a lot of time in Synagogue.
It's a serious day.

That's all true. But it's important to know that Yom Kippur is actually a happy day, a day when we should feel joy deep inside ourselves.

Yom Kippur is part of the High Holiday season - which begins on Rosh Hashana and continues to Simchat Torah - a season dedicated to cleaning up our mistakes and starting the year fresh.

Every holiday in this season has a different way to approach the exercise. For example, on Rosh Hashana, we think about what this 'Better Me' looks like. We fill ourselves with joy and energy just imagining how good this new year can be!

Now, on Yom Kippur, we approach it differently. On Yom Kippur, we get down to serious business. We spend the day in synagogue without any distractions - things which will take our attention away from the 'Better Me' exercise. So we don't eat. We don't watch TV.



THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

IT'S YOM KIPPUR!

By: Malkie Herson & Dena Torgeman

David was standing on line to check in his luggage in New York's JFK airport. He was returning home from a business trip and couldn't wait to see his family. Suddenly, he felt something heavy against his leg. A piece of luggage belonging to the female passenger behind him, had fallen. As he bent down to help, his eyes met the woman's. "David?" "Sara?" they asked each other, tentatively. "Is that you?" Followed by an enthusiastic, "How are you? It's been so long!"

Two classmates who hadn't seen each other in twenty five years! The questions continued to pour out: "Where do you live?" "What kind of job do you have?" "Do you have kids?"

They each checked their luggage and promised to catch up later. As David waited for his flight to be called, his mind began to wander. Back to fourth grade... He was only nine when his parents moved from New Jersey to Florida, and he was having a difficult time. He didn't make friends very easily and he was terrified that he'd find no new friends. When he walked into school that first day, he was very nervous. He could barely breathe and had no appetite.

He spoke with no one and none of the kids spoke with him. As the day passed, he became more and more miserable. "That's it!" he thought.

"I'm not coming back to this school! If I have to, I'll go live with my grandparents in New Jersey, and go back to my old friends. I'm NOT coming back *here!*" Just half an hour to the end of the day, and David would never have to see this school again for the rest of his life.

Suddenly a girl said, "Hi David! You're new to our class, right? Come sit near me. It's hard being a new kid. I was there once, but it gets easier... Oh, by the way, my name is Sara." David felt as if a thousand-pound weight had been lifted from his shoulders, and he began to relax. All of a sudden, David knew everything would be all right.

Throughout his school years in Florida, David would occasionally think how life might have been if not for Sara. But he had never told Sara what a great impact she'd made. He wondered if she even remembered what she'd done.

Suddenly, he heard Sara's voice, "Caught up with you!" she said breathlessly. "Seems like we're on the same flight!"

"Sara," David asked quietly, "do you remember my first day in fourth grade?"

"No," said Sara, "but I do remember how far you used to hit the ball at recess!"

As David told her of his memories. Sara was pleasantly surprised, "I don't remember it at all, David, and in truth, it was such a small thing."

"Sara, it may have been small to you, but it was huge to me."

A small, simple kindness but a huge, positive impact...

We spend a lot of time in the Synagogue with others who also want to become their 'Better Self'.

To prepare for Yom Kippur, we think back to our past year, we think about our behaviors. Did we hurt anyone's feelings? Were we always respectful? Caring? Responsible?

If we uncover any mistakes we've made, we try to make amends. This is an intense process. First, we want to empathize, to think about how the other person must have felt by our actions. We feel regret. Sincere regret. We ask the person for forgiveness hoping that the other person can hopefully forget what happened and not carry the hurt feeling with him/her. We also have to think about how we can avoid making the same mistake again.

On Yom Kippur, we ask Hashem to give us the strength to be the 'Best Me'.

So why does this mean that Yom Kippur is a happy day? Because when we're becoming better people, and when Hashem is forgiving us and our friends are forgiving us, isn't that a reason to be happy? We should feel great that we have a fresh start!

At the end of Yom Kippur, the Rabbi blows a single very long Shofar blast, it's called a Tekiah Gedola (great blast). This is a sound of victory, that we have looked at ourselves, and decided to become better people, and that we feel great about the new year!



Adapted from "The Complete Story of Tishrei"

Herschel the Pauper wandered the streets, begging for money, clothing, food, anything that could help him get by. It wasn't that Herschel was too lazy to hold down a job, he just had no luck finding one. He accepted his fate with joy.

One cold autumn evening, Herschel traveled to the outskirts of town where houses were generously spaced out by fields that appeared to stretch for miles. After hours of walking, he reached a grand mansion. He knocked on the door, hoping to get some money or clothes from the homeowner. A distinguished looking man answered the door and invited him in. "My dear boy, I have lots of old clothing in the basement. Take as much as you'd like," the man told Herschel. Herschel was incredibly grateful. He kissed the man's hand and gave him a heartfelt blessing, as tears welled up in his eyes. What a generous man!

Herschel crept down to the basement that was five times the size as most houses in the center of town. It was overflowing with piles of books, tools, clothing, shoes – too many items to describe! Herschel was overwhelmed just looking around at the vast collection. He whistled happily as he rummaged. He carefully folded the items he chose into a neat pile. He searched for a string to bundle them up for easy carrying. In the distance, he spotted a thin green wire hanging from the ceiling. "This would be perfect to hold my pile together," thought Herschel, "I'm sure the kind man won't mind." He took out his pocket knife and sliced a yard-long portion.

Suddenly the entire room went pitch black! He heard a crash on the floor above him! What had happened? A man came rushing down the stairs to the basement. "What have you done?! What have you done?!" the

man frantically yelled out at Herschel. The man spotted the cut green wire. "How could you! You've severed the main electric line to the entire house! We have no electricity, and it will take days to get a professional electrician to come to this side of town! Oh, what have you done?!"

Herschel stood motionless, barely able to catch his breath from the shock. He felt utterly terrible. It was a simple mistake; he hadn't meant to cause any harm. He had been so grateful to the kind man who had invited him in, he didn't mean to damage anything at all! **A simple, little error but a huge, negative impact!**



THE DIALOGUE
 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Yom Kippur is a time to take a good look at our past year and try to make up for any wrong things we may have done. This is called "DOING TESHUVA". Teshuva is a Hebrew word that means "return". When we make amends, we return to our best selves.

- ◆ Sometimes we do things - either good or bad - that seem like "it's no big deal" but its impact is greater than we could have imagined. Has this ever happened to you?
- ◆ How do we fix mistakes? What can we do to make sure that we don't repeat them?
- ◆ How does it make you feel to know that Hashem (G-d) is rooting for us to succeed in fixing our mistakes?