

THE HOLIDAY EDITION

For grades K-2



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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. We spend a lot of time in the

THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

IT'S YOM KIPPUR!

By: Malkie Herson & Dena Torgeman

Ellie walked into shul (synagogue) on Yom Kippur, full of excitement. Ten days ago, she had so much fun celebrating Rosh Hashana. But today seemed different. Everyone around her in shul seemed so serious and focused. Why the long faces? Where are the smiles?

Ellie's mood shifted.

Her mind began to wander...



She remembered the third day of school. There was a new kid in class who hadn't been there the first two days. No one had even bothered to say hello or ask what her name was, not even Ellie. As Ellie laughed and played with her friends, she noticed, out of the corner of her eye, the new girl sitting all alone at her desk with her head in her hands. She looked sad. For a split second, Ellie had felt kind of bad for that girl, but instead of doing anything about it, she just continued playing with her friends. I should have gone over there and said hi, Ellie thought to herself.

Suddenly, the image of the softball field popped into her mind's eye. She could see her dad driving her to practice as she sat in the backseat of the van, anxiously waiting to arrive. The car stopped to a halt, and Ellie flung the door open, nearly falling out of the van. She sprung to her feet and raced towards her friends. As she threw her bag on a bench, running to the team, she could hear her dad's voice in the distance. "Good luck at practice, Ellie!" I didn't even say goodbye to Dad, Ellie thought in her head.

CRUNCH! Out of nowhere, Ellie remembered eating the last chocolate chip cookie in front of her younger brother, waving the half bitten morsel in his face. "I got the last one!" she teased. She knew those were Aaron's favorite, and she had eating most of the package. That wasn't very nice of me, Ellie thought regretfully.

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!



Ellie realized that she wasn't feeling so excited anymore. It was as if all the sweetness of the past holiday had disappeared.

Her mother, who was sitting next to her in shul, noticed the sour face Ellie was wearing. "Ellie, dear, what's the matter?" she asked.

"This Yom Kippur holiday is making me miserable. I started thinking about all the mistakes I made last year. I feel so bad!" Ellie told her.

"Ellie," her mother began, "Yom Kippur is quite a serious day. But it doesn't have to be gloomy. Look at it this way: Now that you've thought about some of your behavior that wasn't so great, do you think that you could think of ways to do even better this year? Think of Yom Kippur as a gift: Now you *know* where you can try harder. And I know you can do it. You were so excited for the sweet new year just a while ago on Rosh Hashana."

Ellie thought long and hard about what her mother had said. Perhaps she *could* make amends and do even better in the year to come. After all, she knew that within herself she held sweet possibilities of goodness. She could do it! Rosh Hashana had given her the confidence to know how great she is, and Yom Kippur had given her the opportunity to reflect and figure out how to *be* that great person.



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 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.

- ◆ Is it always easy to admit our mistakes? Are there times that it is easier? Are there people to whom it is easier? Why?
- ◆ 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?