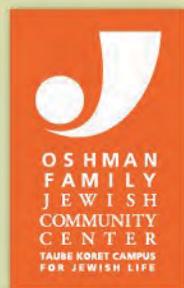




Welcoming a New Year:

A High Holidays
Toolkit for Families



Welcoming the New Year 5781

A High Holiday Toolkit for Families

A new Jewish year is about to begin. Except this year, everything is different. Many of us are working and learning from home; many of us are thinking about the safety of our friends and family. When it comes to the High Holidays, many of us will celebrate in different ways from ever before, and some of us might celebrate for the first time! This new world in which we are living does open new opportunities to do things differently or to try something for the first time.

We hope that, even amid this year's constraints and challenges, we can cultivate new confidence to take ownership of Jewish experiences. This is a chance to actively shape Jewish traditions in a way that is authentic and meaningful to YOU. As a way to support this communal moment of new journeys, we have collected some easy and useful ideas, tools and content for you to use as a family, community or individuals. We hope that these suggestions help infuse significance into the new, very different year we are about to welcome. May it be a sweet one!

The root of the word Shanah, year, has a double meaning. Included in these two meanings are two senses of the word "shanah" which almost contradict each other. On the one hand, the meaning of "shanah" is "repetition," something that comes back on itself time and time again. This sense of "shanah" evokes the cycle of time: a set cycle of day and night, summer and winter, which return and repeat year after year. But on the other hand, the word "shanah" also means "change." Days and months blossom into new possibilities and new experiences. This sense of the word shows the changes that occur in relation to time passed.

- Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz was an Israeli Rabbi, teacher, philosopher, social critic, author, translator and publisher. His edition of the Talmud made Talmud study accessible to the wide public.



Ideas for Families

Before Rosh Hashanah: Getting into the Spirit of the Holiday

New Year's cards for friends and family

New Year's cards prepared by hand never go out of style! It is worth spending the time to create personal family greeting cards made from the heart. You can send them to your friends via actual snail mail. In addition, crafting family new year's cards can be a meaningful opportunity for adults and children to work on a project together. Choosing family photos for the card is a wonderful way to reminisce about the past year.

A wall of apologies

Asking for forgiveness is difficult—for children and for grown-ups! This season is an opportunity to become more comfortable with apologizing together as a family. We recommend a model for saying sorry to each other: On an empty wall in your house, hang a large posterboard or use a whiteboard. You can write your apologies up on the wall. "Maya, I am sorry I was late to pick you up from school." "Ido, Sorry that I took your toy without permission." You can write apologies small or large —both can be hard to say, sometimes!

Resolutions and wishes for the upcoming year

Supply your family with both bright- and dark-colored balloons. On the bright balloons, use a sharpie to write wishes for the upcoming year. For example, "I hope we get a dog!" On the dark colored balloons, write examples of what you might hope to leave behind you. For example, "Sometimes I get angry and I yell at my brother." Taking your family's collection of balloons, pop the dark balloons and send the bright balloons off into the sky!

Family Envelopes

This envelope activity is another opportunity for collective soul-searching as a family. For this activity, each person in your family receives an envelope. Each writes on the envelope one goal for the year that each promises to take on for him or herself. For example, "I will take a shower without arguing!" Place the envelopes on a table so that everyone in the family can see them. In each envelope, family members can place little notes that elaborate how they each plan to help achieve the goal written on the envelope!



Jar of Wishes

Write down wishes that you hope will come true over the next year on little notes, and put them in a jar. You can decorate the jar with stickers and glitter and ribbons. The jar should stay in a visible place over the next year, and can be opened periodically to check the wishes progress. Of course, you can add wishes over the course of the year, too!

Name Acrostic

This is a great activity for practicing Hebrew writing. Write your child's name (in Hebrew) vertically, and use each letter to write a wish for the upcoming year. Of course, the whole page can be decorated, too. The same activity can be done with the English name.

Adapting Traditions to Our Time

Jewish culture consists of traditions that are beautiful and deep, but which we might be inclined to toss aside because they seem irrelevant to our lives. If we toss them aside, we will miss out on the meaningful treasures of our culture. Here are some ideas of how to adapt the traditions that take place between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Tashlich

This tradition, which originated in the Middle Ages, takes place on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The ceremony takes place alongside a source of water. Tashlich is a symbolic act which represents "tossing away" your sins before the beginning of the new year. Along with a special prayer, there was a custom to shake one's pockets into the water as a symbolic gesture of getting rid of the sins and getting cleaned for the new year. In later generations, it became common to throw pieces of bread into water that contains fish! There are many ways to refresh this tradition for your own family.

The Shehechyanu Blessing

"Blessed Are you, Our God, Ruler of the Universe, who gave us life, sustained us, and brought us to this moment."

This beautiful blessing invites a moment of gratitude for our very existence. Traditionally, this blessing is recited after candle lighting or Kiddush on a Holiday. But we can bless the moment whenever we want! Today, we might say



this blessing with the people we love, our family, and our friends. You might want to add your own line to the blessing by mentioning something that you experienced, learned or accomplished this year.

The Traveler's Prayer

The start of a new year is also the start of a new journey. It is incumbent upon us to make time for our families to account for the paths we hope to travel. You can then recite The Travelers Prayer in together with joy!

May it be Your will, Lord, our God and the God of our ancestors, that You lead us toward peace, guide our footsteps toward peace, and make us reach our desired destination for life, gladness, and peace. May You rescue us from the hand of every foe, ambush along the way, and from all manner of punishments that assemble to come to earth. May You send blessing in our handiwork, and grant us grace, kindness, and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us. May You hear the sound of our humble request because You are God Who hears prayer requests. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears prayer.

A secular version of the blessing:

*May it be
That we will go our way in peace, and return in peace.
That we will be able to rely on peace, and that we can direct ourselves and others toward peace.
That we will arrive at the place of our desires, for a life of happiness and peace.
And that we will return in peace.
That all our doings will be blessed.
May all we see, and all who see us, be full of grace, compassion and mercy.
Amen*



The Ten Days of Repentance

The ten days in between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are called the Ten Day of Repentance. Rosh Hashanah falls on the 1st and 2nd day of the month of Tishrei, and Yom Kippur happens on the 10th of Tishrei. These ten days are characterized by self-reflection and soul-searching. These ten days can be set apart by creating a unique feeling in your house: the effort to make a reckoning with yourself can even be demonstrated in front of your children. You might create ten questions that you will ask yourself, one question for each of the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Your family can spend time each night answering the questions and learning from each other's answers, as well.

The Meal Before Yom Kippur

Whether or not you plan to fast for Yom Kippur, there is always great meaning available when a family gathers around a holiday table. The dinner before Yom Kippur has endless potential for being a deep and poignant meal experience. Consider discussing "final meals," or sparking conversation about themes relevant to the day to come.

Blessing The Children

On Shabbat Friday nights before the meal, there is a tradition of parents blessing the children. This tradition also occurs on the evening of Yom Kippur. Parents place their hands on the heads of the children, one after the next. The words of the blessing are the same for each; they are taken from the Biblical Priestly Blessing in the ancient Temple. You can recite the traditional text, or create a blessing all your own. The traditional text reads:

May God make you like Ephraim and Menasseh // May God Make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel.

May God bless you and keep you.

May God shine His face on you in grace.

May God lift his face toward you and give you peace



Please Meet: The Rosh Hashanah Seder Plate!

From ReformJudaism.org

When we think of a Seder, most of us probably think of Passover. We often associate the Seder with the Haggadah, a festive dinner and the ornate Seder Plate adorned with symbolic foods. However, Passover isn't the only time of the Jewish year in which we can have a Seder. Many Jews, especially in the Sephardi (Spanish) and Mizrahi (Arabic) Jewish communities, bring out another Seder plate for the festival of Rosh Hashanah.

In a way, the Rosh Hashanah Seder is almost a perfect complement to the Passover Seder. While the Passover Seder focuses on the Jewish people's difficult past, the Rosh Hashanah Seder serves to guide us into the future – specifically, a very sweet future.

The Seder plate is filled with special foods called simanim, which literally means “signs.” These foods symbolize good omens for the future, often with inventive puns.

TAMAR (DATE)

While Rosh Hashanah is about new beginnings, we also know the importance of endings. Tamar, or “date” in Hebrew, is similar to the word yitamu, which means “to end.” In addition to its sweetness, the date wishes an “end” to those who wish us ill will.

The date can also symbolize the end to injustice, to apathy and indifference, to racism and transphobia and sexism. Without putting an end to the things that harm us or hold us back, we cannot move forward to a new beginning.

RIMON (POMEGRANATE)

The pomegranate is commonly associated with Judaism for a reason: its numerous seeds. According to a tradition, the pomegranate contains 613 seeds, which symbolize the 613 commandments. While we know that not every pomegranate has this many seeds, of course, this allegory encourages us to live righteous lives.

What seeds of your own do you want to plant for the sweet new year? In what ways do you want to uplift others, to grow, to pursue justice?



RUBIA (STRING BEAN)

Rubia (bean/legume, often associated with string beans) is similar to the Hebrew yirbu, which means “to multiply.” This symbol beckons to a future wherein our merits and blessings will have multiplied. Libyan Jews often substitute string beans with a mixture of sugar and sesame seeds, symbolizing the wish for as many blessings as there are sugar crystals and seeds on the seder plate.

Think about your community; what ideas do we want to multiply? What lessons do we want to teach our community that few understand? Is it how to be an antiracist community? Is it how to celebrate diversity?

KARTI (LEEK/SCALLION)

Did you know that scallions and leeks have multiple forms of imagery in Judaism? On Passover, many Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews gently “whip” each other with scallions/leeks at the dinner table, mimicking Egyptian slave drivers from the Exodus story. On Rosh HaShanah, these Jews tear these vegetables into pieces and toss them over their shoulders, beckoning God to cut off our enemies. This is because karti, which is Hebrew for scallion/leek, sounds a lot like the word yikartu, meaning “cut off.”

We all have things in our life we want to cut off, and the High Holidays are a perfect time to reflect on that. What is no longer serving us in our paths as Jews? What is holding us back that we must cut off?

SALKA (BEET)

Salka, which is Aramaic for beet, sounds similar to the Hebrew word siluk, which means “removal.” Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews eat these, asking God to remove our enemies from our path. We can use this symbolism the same way we do with leeks and scallions: as a reminder to remove things out of our life that are keeping us from achieving our aspirations.

K’RA (PUMPKIN/GOURD)

K’ra is very phonetically similar to the word kara; the former means pumpkin/gourd, and the latter means “to tear apart” and “to proclaim.” Jews use this pun asking that God “tear apart” every evil decree against us and “to proclaim” our good merits, or blessings. This can serve as a reminder for us to be thankful and hopeful for the future, even when things seem difficult to handle.



GEZER (CARROT)

The Hebrew word gezer sounds like the word ligzor, which means to “cut off” and “to decree” (seeing a pattern here?) Like the pumpkin, this sign is symbolic of the Jewish wish that God judge us with positive decrees. Additionally, in Yiddish, the word for “carrots” and “to increase” are the same – mehren – and Eastern European Jews use this as a blessing for an increased bounty. Similarly, we can use this symbol as a reminder of the bounty and the positivity that we are capable of sharing with those around us.

FISH

Speaking of bounty, some Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews serve fish on Rosh HaShanah as a symbol of plenty and fertility. As a vegetarian alternative, you can use an egg (similar to Passover) or whatever symbolizes bounty and fertility to you.

ROSH (HEAD)

Many Jewish communities take the meaning of Rosh HaShanah – “head of the year” – very literally by putting a fish head or a lamb’s head on the Seder plate. While many opt not to eat the head, many see it as a prayer that we be more like the “head” and less like the “tail.”

APPLES/QUINCES AND HONEY

Dipping apples in honey is the most widely known symbol for Rosh HaShanah and the prayer for “a sweet new year,” and for Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews, this is no different. Iraqi Jews, for instance, bake their apples with sugar, and Yemenite Jews use quinces (pear-like fruits) instead of apples.

MAKE YOUR OWN PUNS

Originally, these puns were based on the Hebrew or Aramaic names of the foods, but local communities eventually invented new puns based on their local languages and dialects. Don’t hesitate to think of your own clever, witty, relevant or generally meaningful food/blessing puns or word plays!

Regardless of what we choose to eat and serve on our Seder plates, the symbolism of sweetness, of a new year with endless potential can inspire all of us to live with passion, with love, and with righteous action.



Around the Table: Prompts for Family Conversations

In order to emphasize the holidays' relevance to our daily lives, and to discover the eternal echoes of this ancient season, we suggest the following conversation starters. You might choose one question to present to your family or your holiday guests. You can take turns answering the question one by one around the table.

Conversation topics for your holiday table:

Renewal

- Something that renewed itself over the last year
- Something that will renew itself in the upcoming year

Wishes

- A wish I have for myself for the upcoming year
- A wish I have for my family for the upcoming year
- A wish I have for my community for the upcoming year
- A wish I have for the world for the upcoming year

Promises

- A promise I make to myself for the upcoming year
- A goal I want to achieve in the upcoming year

Life Experiences

- A meaningful experience from the last year
- An important lesson I learned last year

Apologies

- A personal story about asking for forgiveness
- A personal story about receiving for forgiveness

Stories of the Holiday

- Tell a childhood story about Rosh Hashanah when you were growing u



Activities You Can Do at Home (Before or During the Holiday)

Making decorative blessing letters

Prepare construction paper, markers, paints, glue, scissors, glitter (if you dare) and/or stickers. Maybe you have an old magazine that you can cut up to use its letters! Make a decorated letter to send to a loved one, or create a beautiful New Year's card for your friends. If you are creating these decorated letters in a group, you can assign a recipient to each person, and exchange the letters amongst yourselves during your holiday meals

Create a family calendar

Make a huge yearly calendar for your family! You can mark important events -- birthdays, graduations, special trips, visits to the grandparents. You can color code the calendar, or mark the important dates with special decorations. You can add pictures, stickers, and whatever else you might want.

Tashlich Ceremony

The Tashlich Ceremony is a symbolic act wherein one "sends away" one's sins and mistakes that have been committed over the last year. The tradition is to ritualistically toss our sins into a natural water source. One could reenact this ceremony next to a home swimming pool, lawn hose, or even a kitchen sink. You might "send away" your sins by tossing bread, emptying your pockets, or writing notes on slips of paper that you then drown in water

The traditional ceremony includes reciting a collection of verses from the Bible (mostly Psalms), which can be found here:

Who is an Almighty like You Forbearer of iniquity, and forgiver of transgression for the remnant of God's heritage? God does not maintain wrath forever, for God desires to do kindness. God will again show us compassion, God will suppress our iniquities; and You will cast into the depths of the sea all their sins. You will grant truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham, as You swore to our fathers from the days of old. From the narrowness [of distress] I called [to] God; You answered me with the breadth of Divine relief. God is with me, I will not fear, what can man do to me? God is with me, to help me, and I will see my enemies' [defeat]. It is better to take refuge in God than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in God than to trust in nobles.



Joyfully exult in God, [you] righteous ones, for the upright, praise is fitting. Thank God with the harp, with the ten-stringed lyre sing to God. Sing God a new song, play skillfully with jubilation. For upright is the word of God, and all God's deeds [are done] with faithfulness. The Almighty loves righteousness and justice, the kindness of God fills the earth. By the word of God, the heavens were made, and by the breath of God's mouth, all their hosts. God gathers like a mound the waters of the sea, God places in vaults the deep waters. Fear God, all the earth, of God, be frightened all dwellers of the inhabited world. For God spoke and it became; God commanded and it stood. God annuls the counsel of nations, God disrupts the intention of peoples. The counsel of God will stand forever, the thoughts of God's heart throughout all generations. Fortunate is the nation for whom God is their God, the people God chose as a heritage. From the heavens, God looks [down], God sees all mankind. From God's dwelling place, God watches intently all the inhabitants of the earth. God forms their hearts all together; God perceives all their doings. A king is not saved by a great army; a mighty man is not rescued with [his] great strength. A horse is deceptive [assurance] for deliverance, and with its great strength it provides no escape. Behold, the eye of God is on those who fear God, on those who wait for God's kindness. To rescue their soul from death, and to keep them alive during famine. Our soul yearned for God, our help and our shield is He. For in God our heart will rejoice, for in God's Holy Name we trust. May your kindness, God, be upon us, as we have waited for You

May it be Your will God, our God, and God of our fathers, most High Almighty Who is crowned with thirteen attributes of mercy, that this be a time of favor before You, and may it ascend before You our recitation of the Thirteen Attributes of mercy, [which are contained in the verses: "Who is an Almighty like You" which correspond to the Thirteen Attributes, "Almighty, Merciful, Gracious etc.," that we have recited before You. Consider it as if we had comprehended all the esoteric meanings and the combinations of the Holy Names that are formed from them. And the joining of their attributes, which, one by one, shall approach [You] to sweeten the severe judgments. And so, cast into the depths of the sea all our sins. And You, with Your goodness, arouse Your mercy, that we may be cleansed from all forms of impurity. And may there ascend [before You] all the sparks of holiness which have been scattered. And may we be refined and purified through Your goodness. You Almighty, are our deliverance, the Keeper of kindness for thousands [of generations.] And with Your abundant compassion grant us long life, a life of peace, a life of goodness, a life of blessing, a life of good sustenance, a life of bodily vigor, a life in which there is fear of Heaven and fear of sin, a life in which there is no shame or disgrace, a life of prosperity and honor, in order that we may serve You, a life in which there will be



within us love of Torah and fear of Heaven, a life [in which] You will fulfill the wishes of our hearts for goodness. And remember us for life O King, Who desires life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, Living God. And tear up the evil [parts] of our sentence, and may our merits be stated before You.

Apple Bobbing

As apples are one of the holiday's symbols, why not bring back an old camp game? Bob for apples by placing apples in a bowl of water or flour. Tie your hands behind your back and see who can succeed in grabbing an apple!

Bow and Arrow, Apple and Honey

Place a line of good-looking apples on the table. If you can acquire a bow and arrow, you can dip the arrow in honey and then shoot the honey-arrow into the apple! (Warning: this is a messy activity!)

Blowing the Shofar

Is there someone in your family who knows how to blow the shofar? Or is musically talented? If you can acquire a shofar, practicing blowing the shofar is a great activity on its own! You can practice the traditional notes: Tekiah, Shvarim, Truah. And of course, host a competition to see who in your family can blow the longest Tekiah!

Fortune Cookies

Bake New Year's fortune cookies with your kids! You can place your own customized fortune notes inside cookies. Write your own "fortunes" with wishes for the upcoming year!



Ideas for Adults

Classical Jewish Texts and Guiding Questions

The 19th century Hasidic master, Rabbi Hayyim of Zans, used to share this parable: A man had been wandering about in a forest for several days, not knowing which was the right way out. Suddenly he saw a person approaching him. His heart was filled with joy. “Now I shall certainly find out which is the right way,” he thought to himself. When they neared one another, he asked them: “Brother, tell me which is the right way. I have been wandering about this forest for several days.” Said the other to him, “Brother, I do not know the way out either. For I too have been wandering about here for many, many days. But this I can tell you: do not take the way I have been taking, for that will lead you astray. And now let us look for a new way out together.”

–Shmuel Yosef Agnon

Shmuel Yosef Agnon was a Nobel Prize laureate writer and was one of the central figures of modern Hebrew fiction. His works deal with the conflict between the traditional Jewish life and language and the modern world. They also attempt to recapture the fading traditions of the European shtetl (village).

In which areas of our lives it is time to look for a new way? (Your answer could relate to personal, professional, national or global issues.)



Rabbi Hoshaiah taught: When an earthy court decrees: “Today is New Year’s Day,” the holy one tells the ministering angels: “Set up the judicial dais. Summon the advocates to defend and to prosecute. For my children have decreed that today is New Year’s Day.”

If, however, the court has decided to intercalate the month [and thus to advance New Year’s Day to] the next day, the holy one tells the ministering angels: “Remove the judicial dais, dismiss all the advocates, since my children have decreed: “Tomorrow is New Year’s Day.”

And the proof? “A decree for Israel is an ordinance for the God of Jacob” (Psalms 81:5). But when it is not a decree for Israel, it is not—if one dare speak thus—an ordinance for the God of Jacob.

-The Book of Legends, based on: Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah.

The Book of Legends is a compilation of Aggadot (tales) that was compiled and edited by Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Rawnitzki starting from 1903. Most of the sources come from the period of the Mishana and the Talmud (1st to 5th century)

- **Who decides when Rosh Hashanah occurs?**
- **What is the philosophical/ theological meaning behind the choice?
How do you feel about it?**
- **When thinking about Jewish culture and who has the “ownership” of it, who gets to design and shape our traditions?**



1. What is complete repentance? He who once more had in it in his power to repeat a violation, but separated himself therefrom, and did not do it because of repentance, not out of fear or lack of strength. For example? One who knew a woman sinfully, and after a process of time he met her again privately, and he still loving her as theretofore, and he being in a state of potency, and the meeting is in the same land where the sin was first committed, if he parted without sinning, he has attained complete repentance. Of such Solomon said: "Remember then thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecc. 12.1). Even if he made no reparation save in his old age, at a time when it was already impossible for him to repeat his misdeeds, although it is not the best repentance, it still is of help to him and he is considered a penitent. Moreover, though he continued a life of sin but did repent on his dying day, and did die a penitent, all of his sins are forgiven, even as it is said: "While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain" (Ibid. 12.2), yea, that is the day of death. Deduct herefrom that if he remembered his Creator and did repent ere he died, he was forgiven.
2. What is repentance? The sinner shall cease sinning, and remove sin from his thoughts, and wholeheartedly conclude not to revert back to it, even as it is said: "Let the wicked forsake his way" (Is. 55.7); so, too, shall he be remorseful on what was past, even as it is said: "Surely after that I was turned, I repented" (Jer. 31. 19). In addition thereto he should take to witness Him Who knoweth all secrets that forever he will not turn to repeat that sin again, according to what it is said: "Say unto Him.... neither will we call any more the work of our hands our gods" (Hos. 14.3-4). It is, moreover, essential that his confession shall be by spoken words of his lips, and all that which he concluded in his heart shall be formed in speech.



3. He who confesses by speech but has not his heart's consent to abandon his erstwhile conduct, behold him, he is like one taking an immersion of purification and in his grasp is an impure creeping thing, when he knows the immersion to be of no value till he cast away the impure creeping thing. Even so it is advised to do, saying: "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy" (Pro. 28. 13). In confessing to God, it is obligatory to name the sin, even as it is said: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them a god of gold" (Ex. 32.31).
4. Among the ways of repentance are, for the penitent to continue to cry out in tearful supplication before the Name, to bestow alms according to his means, and to distance himself exceedingly from the thing wherein he sinned, to have his identity changed, as if saying: "I am now another person, and not that person who perpetrated those misdeeds", to completely change his conduct for the good and straight path, and to exile himself from his place of residence, for exile atones iniquity, because it leads him to submissiveness and to be meek and humble-spirited.
5. The penitent who confesses publicly is praiseworthy, and it is commendable for him to let the public know his iniquities, and to reveal the sins between himself and his neighbor to others, saying to them: "Truly, I have sinned against that man, and I have wronged him thus and such, but, behold me this day, I repent and am remorseful". But he, who is arrogant and reveals not but covers up his sins, is not a wholehearted penitent, of whom it is said: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28.13). But that is saying solely concerning sins between man and man, but sins between man and God, the penitent need not make public, on the contrary it would be impudent of him to reveal them. He, however, should repent before God, blessed is he! and before Him he should detail his sins; and then make public confession upon them by



simply saying: "I have sinned". Such procedure is, indeed, for his own good, even as it is said: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Ps. 32.1).

6. Although it is ever well to cry out and repent, but during the space of the ten days' time between Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom ha-Kippurim it is exceedingly better, and the supplication is presently accepted, even as it is said: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found" (Is. 55.6). But that is saying solely concerning an individual, but a community every time they cry out a whole hearted repentance they are answered, even as it is said: "As the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for" (Deut. 6.7).
9. Neither repentance nor the Day of Atonement atone for any save for sins committed between man and God, for instance, one who ate forbidden food, or had forbidden coition and the like; but sins between man and man, for instance, one injures his neighbor, or curses his neighbor or plunders him, or offends him in like matters, is ever not absolved unless he makes restitution of what he owes and begs the forgiveness of his neighbor. And, although he makes restitution of the monetary debt, he is obliged to pacify him and to beg his forgiveness. Even he offended not his neighbor in aught save in words, he is obliged to appease him and implore him till he be forgiven by him. If his neighbor refuses a committee of three friends to forgive him, he should bring to implore and beg of him; if he still refuses he should bring a second, even a third committee, and if he remains obstinate, he may leave him to himself and pass on, for the sin then rests upon him who refuses forgiveness. But if it happened to be his master, he should go and come to him for forgiveness even a thousand times till he does forgive him
10. It is forbidden for man to be ill-natured and unforgiving, for he must be easily appeased but unwieldy to wrath; and when a sinner



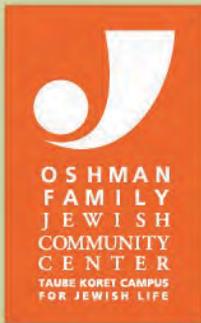
implores him for pardon, he should grant him pardon wholeheartedly and soulfully. Even if one persecuted him and sinned against him exceedingly he should not be vengeful and grudge-bearing, for such is the path of the seed of Israel and of their excellent heart. Only the idolaters are not so, they are of uncircumcised heart, and their wrath is ever-watchful; and, because the Gibonites were unforgiving and unappeasing, that of them it is said: "Now the Gibonites were not of the children of Israel" (II. Samuel, 21.2).

~ Mishneh Torah, Repentance, Chapter 2, Maimonides (Rambam)

The Mishneh Torah ("Repetition of the Torah") is a code of Jewish religious law (Halakha) authored by Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon). The Mishneh Torah was compiled between 1170 and 1180 CE, while Maimonides was living in Egypt, and is regarded as Maimonides' magnum opus.

- **Do you think it is possible to create “rules” about Teshuvah–repentance?**
- **Which parts of the chapter do you agree with? Are there parts you disagree with? Why?**
- **Can you share a life moment that reminds you of Maimonides’ rules?**





The Oshman Family JCC is proud to be a part of the Koret Initiative on Jewish Peoplehood.



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