

## A Teacher's Guide to Judaism

### Yom Kippur

**Yom Kippur** (the Day of Atonement) occurs on the tenth day of the Jewish month of Tishrei (September or October). It is the holiest and most solemn day of the year for the Jewish faith and is marked each year with a reflection of the sins a person may have committed by praying and fasting for 25 hours (from the previous sundown until the end of the day of Yom Kippur when the shofar is blown). In this way the mind is able to focus on prayer and atoning for sins, rather than be distracted by mundane actions. Yom Kippur signals the end of the ten days of repentance, which begins with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

#### Meaning:

Yom Kippur means 'Day of Atonement': Yom = day, Kippur = atonement

#### Traditional activities/abstinences:

- Pray to say sorry for any wrongdoings in the past year
- No food or drinks
- No perfume, showers
- No leather
- Wear white
- All the above to signify personal purity

#### In the Home:

A large meal will be served before the fast begins and again once the fast ends. It is traditional to invite friends and family over to celebrate the end of the fast. Some synagogues will break the fast communally.

#### Biblical reading:

Includes the story of Jonah

#### Biblical source:

"For on this day He will forgive you, to purify you, that you be cleansed from all your sins before G-d" (Leviticus 16:30).

Yom Kippur commemorates the day when G-d forgave the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf:

Forty days after hearing G-d say at Mount Sinai, "You shall not have the gods of others in My presence; you shall not make for yourself a graven image," the Jewish people sinned by worshipping idols. Moses spent nearly three months on top of the mountain pleading with G-d for forgiveness, and on the tenth of Tishrei it was finally granted: "I have pardoned, as you have requested."

#### Greeting:

"g'mah chatimah tovah" - may you be sealed in the book of life for good.



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These resources describe practices that are common in the UK, but there is a wide range of Jewish traditions and observance, and different Jewish people have different levels of observance. When interacting with Jewish pupils and their parents, teachers should be aware that it is always best to ask about their own preferences

## DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY

**Torah** – the five books of Moses from the Jewish Bible



### **Jewish months (lunar calendar)**

Nisan (March-April)

Iyyar (April-May)

Sivan (May-June)

Tammuz (June-July)

Av (July-August)

Elul (August-September)

Tishrei (September-October)

Cheshvan (October-November)

Kislev (November-December)

Tevet (December-January)

Shevat (January-February)

Adar (February-March)

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