

Message: Yom Kippur (יום כּפּוּר) 2026 - Be Happy

צום קל חֵבֵרִי

Tzom kal, khaverai.

An easy fast to you, my friends.

Today I want to talk about being happy. Being truly happy stems from being in a right relationship with Adonai and walking in the way you were created to walk. There's a verse in D'varim while Moshe is laying out the blessings for walking with Adonai and the consequences for refusing to pay attention to what Adonai says, the blessings and cursings from Har Girizim and Har Eival:

47 Because you didn't serve Adonai your God with joy and gladness in your heart when you had such an abundance of everything; 48 Adonai will send your enemy against you; and you will serve him when you are hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed and lacking everything; he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he destroys you.

Deuteronomy 28:47–48 (CJB)

This seems harsh. But if you do something without joy, with grumbling and complaining, you are doing that thing like it is forced labor. You treat Adonai like a cruel task master, which He is not. Hashem allows you to go where you want to go. If you live like life is the worst and you have a cruel boss, you will get a cruel boss. When you serve the Lord with joy, you experience joy when you serve.

That's why this season of the year is so important. Repentance which leads to forgiveness restores us to right relationship with the creator and with each other. In that unified state, we should experience the overwhelming joy of serving the Lord. We should be happy.

{be happy guy}

Yom Kippur is one of the most important holidays of the Jewish year. As Judaism's most important holiday, Yom Kippur holds a high level of significance across all Jewish movements and at all levels of religious observance. Many Jews who do not observe any other Jewish custom will refrain from work, fast

and attend synagogue services. Yom Kippur occurs on the 10th day of Tishrei, which is today.

29 "It is to be a permanent regulation for you that on the tenth day of the seventh month you are to deny yourselves and not do any kind of work, both the citizen and the foreigner living with you. 30 For on this day, atonement will be made for you to purify you; you will be clean before ADONAI from all your sins. 31 It is a Shabbat of complete rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves.

"This is a permanent regulation.

Leviticus 16:29–31 (CJB)

On Yom Kippur, it is customary to fast and thereby afflict our souls. As disciples of Yeshua, He gives us a high standard.

16 "Now when you fast, don't go around looking miserable, like the hypocrites. They make sour faces so that people will know they are fasting. Yes! I tell you, they have their reward already! 17 But you, when you fast, wash your face and groom yourself, 18 so that no one will know you are fasting—except your Father, who is with you in secret. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16–18 (CJB)

Not an easy standard to live up to, but definitely one that we should strive for.

On Yom Kippur most of us wear white, which symbolizes purity and calls to mind the promise that our sins shall be made as white as snow.

Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and G-d, not for sins against another person. To atone for sins against another person, you must first seek reconciliation with that person, righting the wrongs you committed against them if possible. I admonish you to pray for the strength to make things right with those in your life that have been separated through the sin of not loving your neighbor as yourself. The teaching this past Shabbat, on Shabbat Shuva, is focused on t'shuva, Biblical repentance. No matter how hard we try, every year we are in need of repentance. Setting aside a time to focus on personal, relational, communal, and spiritual repentance is a blessing to all of us who need to make t'shuvah.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the days in between are referred to as the Days of Awe, Yomim Nora'im. During the yamim nora'im. During this time we reflect on the year, goals, and past actions. We ask ourselves how our behavior has possibly hurt others. We seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God and against other human beings.

Sacrifice קָרְבָּן

In the days of the Tabernacle and the Temple, atonement was expressed through sacrifices and prayer. The Hebrew word translated as **sacrifice** is *korban* (קָרְבָּן), which comes from the root *karav* (קָרַב), meaning “**to draw near**” or “**to come close**.” This gives us an important perspective on the purpose of sacrifice.

There are several widespread misunderstandings about sacrifices. It is important to understand a few basic points. The sacrifices were not simply a price paid to earn forgiveness. In fact, many of the sacrifices had nothing to do with sin. They were **not** intended to appease an angry or vengeful God, and they were not a means of salvation. Scripture itself makes clear that God does not delight in the blood of animals as an end in itself.

Throughout the Tanakh, the prophets repeatedly emphasized that animal sacrifices themselves could not cleanse sin. Ultimately, forgiveness and cleansing come from God.

Consider Micah 6:6–8:

6 *“With what can I come before ADONAI
to bow down before God on high?
Should I come before him with burnt offerings?
with calves in their first year?*

7 *Would ADONAI take delight in thousands of rams
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Could I give my firstborn to pay for my crimes,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”*

8 *Human being, you have already been told
what is good, what ADONAI demands of you—
no more than to act justly, love grace
and walk in purity with your God.*

Micah 6:6–8 (CJB)

The fundamental purpose of the *korban*, the sacrifice, was to enable us to **draw near to God**. It provided a *kapara*—a covering and, in the broader biblical concept, a means of addressing the debt of sin—so that human beings could approach a holy and omnipotent God. Today, we emphasize practices that

express this return toward God, particularly **repentance, prayer, and tzedakah** (צדקה).

Tzedakah encompasses the ideas of **charity, justice, and righteousness**. It is not merely about giving money; it reflects a life of righteous action, generosity, and responsibility toward others.

Atonement כפרה

The Hebrew word for **atonement** is *kapara* (כפרה). The word *kapara* is associated with two important ideas: **covering** and **ransom**.

First, *kapara* can refer to a covering or protection. This is the word used in the story of Noah when God instructed him to cover the ark with pitch. The covering protected those inside from the waters of judgment. This gives us a powerful picture of our relationship with God. How can sinful human beings approach the all-powerful and holy God uncovered? Without His covering and protection, we could not stand before Him.

Second, *kapara* can refer to a **ransom**—a price paid or exchanged to settle a debt. A ransom provides the payment necessary to release someone from what they owe.

Together, these meanings give us a deeper picture of atonement: God provides a covering that allows us to approach Him and a ransom that addresses the debt created by sin.

Kippur (כפור) is an interesting word as well. In Biblical Hebrew this is the word for atonement, and in modern Hebrew it is a word for frost.

I think that paints a beautiful picture. Imagine frost covering the ground on a cold fall morning. Picture that in your mind. The green grass, the brown trees, the leaves, the brick; everything you see made white by the frost that covers every exposed thing.

“Come now,” says Adonai, “let’s talk this over together. Even if your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow; even if they are red as crimson, they will be like wool.”

Yeshu’yahu [Isaiah] 1: 18 (CJB)

That is atonement.

Forgiveness

Sacrifice is essentially the third step of t'shuva that I taught about on Shabbat. That step is to 'repair' the relationship. Through sacrifice we walk in Adonai's mitzvoth, and we gain atonement. Atonement is a covering that enables us to enter into the presence of Adonai, and it covers the debt that we owe for the lives we have led. The life and death and resurrection of Yeshua provides atonement for our sins.

If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing.

1 John 1:8–9 (CJB)

T'shuva leads to us being forgiven, restored in our relationship with Avinu Shabashamayim.

I feel like I need to say this again here. We do not sacrifice or keep any of the mitzvoth to be saved. We are saved by faith through grace. We sacrifice and keep the mitzvoth because we are saved, we love our King, and we want to walk in His ways.

Here is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God, we also do what he commands. For loving God means obeying his commands.

1 John 5:2–3 (CJB)

Happy is the Man

*Happy the person who finds wisdom,
the person who acquires understanding;*

Proverbs 3:13 (CJB)

I often look to the example of David Melekh. He was not perfect, but he sought after the heart of God. He loved the Word of the Lord, and he tried to walk in the ways of the Lord. He missed the mark often, at least that is how the hilghight reel preserved in the Tanakh looks. However, the way he repented when he fell woefully short of the mark that the Torah sets for us is how he best demonstrated that he was a 'man' after God's own heart'. He cried out to God for mercy when he fell. His teshuva exemplifies what it is to be a man after God's own heart.

I would like to read the 32nd Psalm this morning, and I would like to reflect on this a little bit. This psalm is a maskil, a psalm type that is often translated as "a

contemplation” or understood to be didactic or meditative in nature. It is intended to impart wisdom or insight.

32 1(0) By David. A maskil:

*(1) How blessed are those whose offense is forgiven,
those whose sin is covered!*

*2 How blessed those to whom Adonai imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no deceit!*

*3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
because of my groaning all day long;*

*4 day and night your hand was heavy on me;
the sap in me dried up as in a summer drought. (Selah)*

*5 When I acknowledged my sin to you,
when I stopped concealing my guilt,
and said, “I will confess my offenses to Adonai”;
then you, you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Selah)*

*6 This is what everyone faithful should pray
at a time when you can be found.
Then, when the floodwaters are raging,
they will not reach to him.*

*7 You are a hiding-place for me,
you will keep me from distress;
you will surround me
with songs of deliverance. (Selah)*

*8 “I will instruct and teach you
in this way that you are to go;
I will give you counsel;
my eyes will be watching you.”*

*9 Don’t be like a horse or mule
that has no understanding,
that has to be curbed with bit and bridle,
or else it won’t come near you.*

*10 Many are the torments of the wicked,
but grace surrounds those who trust in Adonai.*

*11 Be glad in Adonai; rejoice, you righteous!
Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

Psalm 32:1–11 (CJB)

This psalm in many ways sums up the high holidays for me. King David writes about the trouble he faces because of his actions and the actions of others. However, he confesses his sins to Adonai who forgives him. Adonai delivers him and comforts him. Adonai protects and shelters him. Adonai teaches him and guides his ways. David then implores the unrepentant to join him because 'grace surrounds those who trust in Adonai'.

This psalm begins with forgiveness and ends with happiness. *'Be glad in Adonai; rejoice, you righteous! Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!'*

Be Happy

Psalm 32 opens with the repeated use of the word 'ashrei', This is often translated as blessed, which is totally true, but it really indicates being happy. You are happy because you are content and you realize how fortunate you are to have what you have.

*(1) How blessed are those whose offense is forgiven,
those whose sin is covered!*

*2 How blessed those to whom Adonai imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no deceit!*

Psalms 32:1-2 (CJB)

This opens in the same way as the first psalm.

*How blessed are those
who reject the advice of the wicked,
don't stand on the way of sinners
or sit where scoffers sit!*

*Their delight
is in ADONAI's Torah;
on his Torah they meditate
day and night.*

Psalms 1:1-2 (CJB)

שְׁעָרִים. הַטָּאִים. לְצִיִּים.

Sinners. Wicked. Scoffers.

These are not happy people. These are three types of people that happy people, blessed people, avoid. Why is this? Because these people lead you on paths

that separate you from Hashem. Being this type of person separates you from Hashem.

*10 Many are the torments of the wicked,
but grace surrounds those who trust in Adonai.*

*11 Be glad in Adonai; rejoice, you righteous!
Shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

Psalm 32:10–11 (CJB)

Happy people are not tormented people.

Happy people are people who avoid the influence of tormented people. Happy people are forgiven, atoned for, guiltless, pure of heart. Happy people trust in Adonai and surrounded by grace.

I think this verse from Mishlei is a good summary.

*A happy heart is good medicine,
but low spirits sap one's strength.*

Proverbs 17:22 (CJB)

In Nekhem'ya the people heard the word of Adonai on Rosh Hashanah and were grieved because they were made aware of their sin. He told them,

Don't be sad, because the joy of ADONAI is your strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 (CJB)

A happy heart (לֵב שִׂמְחָה) is good medicine when the joy of the Lord (יְהוָה) is your strength.

This Yom Kippur, I encourage you to fill your heart with joy. So make t'shuva, be forgiven, be happy.

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