

Yom Kippur 5787 Q&A

Twenty questions, every answer from Shulchan Aruch

For learning and general review only — not for halacha l'maaseh. For an actual psak, please consult your Rav.

1. The Torah tells us to “afflict our souls” on Yom Kippur. Where is that command written?

In Parshas Acharei Mos, where the Torah calls the tenth day of the seventh month a day to afflict your souls.

Vayikra 16:29

2. Chazal count five separate forms of affliction that make up this mitzvah. What are they?

Not eating or drinking, not washing, not anointing with oil, not wearing leather shoes, and not having marital relations.

Mishnah Yoma 8:1

3. Tosefes Shabbos — adding time onto a sacred day before it starts — is actually derived from a pasuk about Yom Kippur. What's the source?

The pasuk says to afflict ourselves “on the ninth, in the evening,” though Yom Kippur is the tenth — teaching that the inuy begins before nightfall. Chazal use this as the source for tosefes Shabbos and Yom Tov too.

Vayikra 23:32; Rosh Hashanah 9a

4. How much food does the Mishnah say a person must eat to be liable for eating on Yom Kippur?

A large date's worth, koseves hagasah — about the size of a date together with its pit.

Mishnah Yoma 8:2

5. And how much liquid makes a person liable for drinking?

A cheekful, melo lugmav — as much as would fill out one cheek if pushed to the side.

Mishnah Yoma 8:2

6. If someone eats a small amount and then drinks a small amount, do the two combine toward the forbidden shiur?

No. Foods combine with other foods and liquids combine with other liquids, but eating and drinking are always measured separately.

Mishnah Yoma 8:2

7. Is washing completely forbidden on Yom Kippur, or only in certain cases?

It's forbidden even to dip a single finger into water, hot or cold. But if a person's hands, feet, or body are actually dirty — mud, blood, and the like — washing is permitted, since the issur is only for pleasure.

Orach Chaim 613:1

8. Why, then, is a person still allowed to wash negel vasser first thing in the morning, and how much?

Washing for tefillah isn't washing for pleasure, so it's permitted — but only up to the knuckles of the fingers, not the whole hand.

Orach Chaim 613:2, Rema

9. How much of the body is included in the prohibition against anointing with oil?

Even a small part of the body is included — even just to remove sweat, not only a full-body anointing.

Orach Chaim 614:1

10. Is a sick person allowed to use oil on Yom Kippur?

Yes — someone who is sick, even without any danger, or who has sores on his head, is permitted to anoint.

Orach Chaim 614:1

Turn over for more questions »

11. What kind of shoes does the Shulchan Aruch forbid on Yom Kippur?

Shoes or sandals made of leather — even a prosthetic leg covered in leather. Shoes of cloth, straw, or similar materials are permitted.

Orach Chaim 614:2

12. For how long after giving birth may a new mother wear leather shoes?

For thirty days after the birth.

Orach Chaim 614:3

13. Is there ever a reason a healthy person could wear shoes on Yom Kippur despite the prohibition?

Yes — to protect against scorpions or biting creatures, or, in the rain, for someone delicate walking to or from shul.

Orach Chaim 614:4

14. At what age does the Shulchan Aruch say a child should begin practicing a partial fast?

From age nine, a child is trained to fast for part of the day by delaying meals somewhat.

Orach Chaim 616:2

15. Must a healthy pregnant or nursing woman fast the complete Yom Kippur?

Yes — a healthy pregnant or nursing woman is obligated to complete the whole fast like anyone else.

Orach Chaim 617:1

16. How many days after childbirth is a new mother automatically treated as a choleh sheyeish bo sakanah, fed even without asking?

For the first three days — seventy-two hours — after the birth.

Orach Chaim 617:4

17. If a sick person insists he needs to eat, but many doctors disagree, whose opinion do we follow?

The sick person's own words — if he says he needs to eat, we feed him even if a hundred doctors say he doesn't.

Orach Chaim 618:1

18. When we do feed a sick or pregnant person on Yom Kippur, how is the food given?

A little at a time, in amounts below the forbidden shiur, with pauses between each feeding so the amounts don't combine.

Orach Chaim 618:7

19. If a sick person eats on Yom Kippur and recovers enough to bentch, does his bentching change?

Yes — he adds Yaaleh V'Yavo for Yom Kippur inside the bracha of Bonei Yerushalayim.

Orach Chaim 618:10

20. What is the name of the final tefillah of Yom Kippur, and what does the name mean?

Ne'ilah — literally "closing," referring to the closing of the gates as the day comes to an end.

Orach Chaim 623