

Questions for Reflection

10Q *Life's Biggest Questions. Answered By You.*

1. Describe a significant experience that has happened in the past year. How did it affect you? Are you grateful? Relieved? Resentful? Inspired?
2. Is there something that you wish you had done differently this past year? Alternatively, is there something you're especially proud of from this past year?
3. Think about a major milestone that happened with your family this past year. How has this affected you?
4. Describe an event in the world that has impacted you this year. How? Why?
5. Have you had any particularly spiritual experiences this past year? How has this experience affected you? "Spiritual" can be broadly defined to include secular spiritual experiences: artistic, cultural, and so forth.
6. Describe one thing you'd like to achieve by this time next year. Why is this important to you?
7. How would you like to improve yourself and your life next year? Is there a piece of advice or counsel you received in the past year that could guide you?
8. Is there something (a person, a cause, an idea) that you want to investigate more fully in 5782?
9. What is a fear that you have and how has it limited you? How do you plan on letting it go or overcoming it in the coming year?
10. When September 2022 rolls around how do you think you'll feel? What do you think/hope might be different about your life and where you're at as a result of thinking about and answering these questions?
11. What are your predictions for 5782?

Questions for Reflection

1. Who is one person in your life with whom you would like to reconcile and deserves an apology from you? What is the right step to take to begin the reconciliation? Is it an apology or a gesture of another kind? When would be the best time to approach them, if at all?
2. What relationship in your life is in need of healing but is stalled because you are waiting for the other person to make the first move? Can you find the courage to make the first move yourself?
3. What is a realistic first step that you can take and complete before Yom Kippur in a process that can't actually be neatly completed by Yom Kippur itself? Is there an interpersonal conflict that might be aggravated because you are pushing too hard and being impatient for resolution?
4. What is one area of teshuvah that feels like it would require upending your whole life? What could a more manageable version of teshuvah look like? What could you do to cut slack for others to help them make change?
5. What can shake you from a routine or entrenched attitude that is not serving you well? Can you find someone else to "intercede" so you do not feel isolated in teshuvah that is between "you and God" or you and yourself? Can regular learning or prayer be a regular source of "intervention" to help catalyze the self growth you seek?
6. As you enter into Shabbat, try to let go of a hypercritical focus on things you feel that you or others have done wrong. Can you picture a moment in your relationship with another person, or with God, that anchors the beauty, strength, and possibility of your relationship? How could it affect your teshuvah process to keep that moment front and center?
7. How do we know that we have been forgiven or have truly forgiven others? Do we take the time to let people know that they have been forgiven? How can we make our teshuvah more focused on the process rather than the result?

The 40 Day Challenge

Daily Jewish Insights to Prepare for the High Holidays by Rabbi Mark Wildes

1. **Second Chances:** What part of your life deserves a “second chance” – where you can forgive, revisit, or enhance something that will help you become the best version of yourself?
2. **Being Honest with Ourselves:** Is there any area of your life that you are afraid to be honest about? If so, how can you work to go beyond the fear?
3. **Finishing What We Start:** Do you have any personal dreams or goals that have been put on pause? Why, and what can you do to get back on track to achieving them?
4. **Making Music with What Remains:** What perceived “weakness” in yourself could you reinterpret into a strength? Alternatively, what setback in your life can you actually use as an advantage?
5. **Not by Though Alone:** What is one act - or mitzvah – that you can start doing anew, even if it feels difficult to do so?
6. **“Never Sent, Never Signed”:** Controlling Your Anger: Which situations generally make you upset or angry? What practical step(s) can you take in order to be calmer in such moments?
7. **Achieving Wholeness:** What is one time where you acted one way but felt another inside? When this or a similar situation arises in the future, how can you go about being tocho k’boro – where your outside actions mirror your inner feelings?
8. **Smile:** Do you know someone who is, right now, in need of support and inspiration? What small step(s) can you take to help make them smile?
9. **The Real You:** What mitzvah do you currently perform that makes you feel connected to the deepest part of yourself? How can you enhance your performance of that mitzvah?
10. **What Are Your Priorities:** What change(s) can you make to better prioritize how you spend your time and your money in order that these gifts can be more directed toward your moral and spiritual well-being.
11. **Learning from Our Enemies:** What challenging situation in your life or bad habits “cool you down” and prevent you from reaching your life goals? Identify two specific ways to better navigate the situation or break the bad habit.
12. **Love Thy Neighbor:** Identify someone who is very different from you politically or ideologically. What do you know about them that still makes them worthy of your love? Also, how can you show them, that despite your differences, you respect and care for them?

- 13. Consistency:** List one spiritual practice (prayer, Torah study, giving charity, visiting the sick) and one general activity (exercise, painting, writing) that bring you joy and fulfillment. How can you make these practices more consistent in your life?
- 14. If You See Something, Say Something:** Is there someone in your life- a friend, colleague or relative- who has offended you or hurt you in some way? Write down what you would like to say to this person to politely express why you are upset. What else would it take for you to haval and start that relationship anew?
- 15. The Psychology of Gossip:** List one or two scenarios in your daily life that expose you to gossip. How can you limit those activities or somehow prevent the gossip or slander from taking place?
- 16. Holy Grapes:** What are three things for which you are truly grateful and which make you feel more connected to God? (They can even be the basics.)
- 17. Bringing Redemption:** Can you choose a mitzvah- one that you already do and one which you currently do not- which in your mind brings the world closer to God and to the Messianic redemption?
- 18. Judging Favorably:** Reflect on a situation where you felt wronged by another person. Can you consider that there were circumstances in that person's life that could help you better understand why they behaved that way?
- 19. Play the Ball, Not the Person:** How can you maintain politer and respectful dialogue with someone you disagree with? What methods would you employ to debate the merits of an idea, rather than the character of the person themselves?
- 20. Halfway There! Looking Ahead:** Looking back at the past entries, what new insight about yourself, other people, Judaism, or God have you discovered?
- 21. Selichot:** How can you emulate God's trait of compassion in dealing with any of your colleagues at work or family members at home?
- 22. Not in Heaven:** Name one area of Jewish observance which seems remote or foreign to you. What is one step you can take to bring yourself closer to that area of Jewish tradition?
- 23. The Stork:** Choose one act of kindness you can perform by Yom Kippur for someone, or for some group, outside of your inner circle.
- 24. Silence:** In general, when you speak with others do you aim to listen and genuinely hear them out? Think of one or two situations in which being more silent can help you be more receptive to what is being said.
- 25. Focus Amidst the Static:** What physical object(s) do you currently possess or can you consider obtaining that can be used as a source of inspiration for greater spirituality and which can help motivate you to stay more focused amidst the many distractions in your life?
- 26. The Purpose of Rosh Hashanah:** What activities, during the course of your regular day, trigger the idea that God is caring King who provides us with a path for our lives?

- 27. Staying Connected:** What action(s) can you take in order to keep yourself feeling connected to Sinai? For example, praying more regularly, attending a weekly Torah class, or any other mitzvah that you can undertake on a regular basis.
- 28. Our Father, Our King:** Do you think of God more as a parent or a ruler? How can you strengthen the other perception?
- 29. The Message of the Shofar:** What is it that you really want in the coming year that you can think about and pray for when the shofar is being sounded?
- 30. Breath and Honey:** What is one talent you possess and how can you better channel that gift towards a holy or communal goal?
- 31. Working with What You've Got:** Identify one unique gift or talent you possess and one real challenge in your life. How can you use the gift to meet the challenge?
- 32. Warming Others:** Who do you know that you can help with a donation, a loan, or a job to get them through a hard time? If there is no such person in your circle, choose one organization that helps others to which you can donate and/or volunteer.
- 33. Fasting and Feasting:** Are the Jewish fast days part of your spiritual schedule? If not, what new fast day resonates with you that you could observe in the coming year?
- 34. Desensitization:** What is one positive way you use technology and one negative way? How would you build on the former and cut down on the latter?
- 35. The Power of Change:** What past misdeed, failing, or personality flaw can you now use to help other people?
- 36. You Can Run, But You Can't Hide:** Who, in your circle of friends, could use some spiritual encouragement and how can you respectfully engage and direct them towards what they need?
- 37. Living as Angels:** Who is the one other person on whose behalf you would like to pray for this Yom Kippur? Also, who is the one person you would like to express gratitude to before Yom Kippur?
- 38. Getting a 100%:** What is a spiritual goal that you currently feel is unachievable even though it's something you'd like to be able to accomplish? What tangible steps can you take towards achieving this goal?
- 39. Reuniting the King and Queen:** What is one challenging or compromising situation in which you currently find yourself that seems like it "just happened" that, upon further reflection, you can take responsibility for? What possible change can you make in this area?
- 40. A Broken Heart:** Identify three positive qualities within yourself. How in the next year can you make these virtues more of a permanent part of who you are?