

# ERASABLE PERMANENT MARKERS

by Torah.org

Yom Kippur is tomorrow night. What happens on this, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar? "Kippur" is often translated as atonement — to make reparation for bad deeds, and restore a relationship damaged by those offenses.

That is a good description — but why is that limited to Yom Kippur? We have the opportunity to seek G-d's forgiveness each and every day. The Torah teaches us a process of *Teshuva*, repentance, which is accessible to us in any time or place. The admission of our wrongs, the sincere regret for having done them, and the commitment to change for the better — that is *Teshuva*, and it brings us back to G-d. So what is left to be accomplished on Yom Kippur, that we cannot necessarily do on other days?

A number of years ago, my children discovered the story, [Purple, Green and Yellow](#) about Brigid, a girl who convinces her mother to buy "super-indelible-never-come-off-till-you're-dead-and-maybe-even-later" markers. After coloring pictures of roses, lemons and oranges, she gets bored. Predictably, she then experiments on her fingernails, and ultimately her whole body is covered in rainbow colors. True to their branding, the markers don't wash off and her mother is thrown into panic. I won't spoil the story for your children, but eventually she is restored back to normal.

Sometimes, even after making amends, the marks remain. The relationship has been rebuilt, but the purple, green and yellow still won't wash off. Our crimes and mistakes can be excused, but some of the emotional and spiritual impact remains even after achieving forgiveness.

We know this to be true in interpersonal relationships. People forgive each other, and make a sincere effort to recover their friendships, but the scars remain.

Yom Kippur affords us a unique opportunity to cleanse our souls even of those "indelible" marks. G-d rolls back our actions and restores us to purity, so that we can reconnect with Him without the barriers of our past. The atmosphere on Yom Kippur is thoughtful, and somber, but it is followed by the joyous festival of Sukkos five days later. This is an expression of our soul's happiness, having been freed on Yom Kippur from all blemish. (Based on Chid"i and Nesivos Shalom)

May we all take advantage of this opportunity to begin again with a pristine soul, and have a year of health, prosperity, and genuine happiness!