

A Meaningful Gift: A Kapparat Ritual with Money



Set an intention



Make atonement



Do a mitzvah!

Lay the groundwork for a meaningful tzedakah journey in 5781.
Do this short Kapparat ritual on your own, with your housemates or family, or on a zoom call.

1 At the end of the Kapparat ritual, you'll give tzedakah (make a donation).
To get there, start by reflecting on what a meaningful giving practice means to you.

● **Ground it in values.**

What value do you want your gift to reflect in the world?

For example, all people are created in G-d's image (b'tzelem Elohim), justice (tzedakah), or saving a life (pikuach nefesh).

Write it down: _____

● **Make it part of an ongoing practice of giving.**

Write down your intention for your giving practice for 5781:

● **Contribute a meaningful amount.**

What's a meaningful amount?

You get to decide.

What is Kapparat?

Kapparat is a centuries'-old tradition that usually takes place on Erev Yom Kippur (the day before Yom Kippur), but can happen any time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Historically, a chicken becomes the metaphorical scapegoat for the person doing the ritual, taking on their sins before being donated to charity. We're not the first to substitute money for the chicken.

Find out more about Kapparat:
myjewishlearning.com/article/yom-kippur-at-home

Jewish tradition offers goals to reach for, but it does not require perfection. It calls for doing one good deed at a time.

Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 249

כמה חייב ליתן וכיצד יתננה: שיעור נתינתה אם ידו משגת יתן כפי צורך העניים ואם אין ידו משגת כל כך יתן עד חומש נכסיו מצוה מן המובחר ואחד מעשרה מדה בינונית

The amount of charity one should give is as follows: if one can but afford, let the person give as much as is needed. Under ordinary circumstances, a fifth of one's property is most laudable. To give one-tenth is the average disposition.

Isaiah 58:9-10

אם-תסיר מתוכך מוטה, שלח אַצְבַּע וְדַבַּר-אָנוּ. וְתַפֵּק לְרֵעֵב נַפְשֶׁךָ, וְנִפְשׁ נִעְנֶה תִשְׁבִּיעַ; וְזָרַח בַּחֲשֵׁךְ אֹרֶךְ, וְאִפְלֹתֶךָ כְּצֹהַרִים

If you banish the yoke from your midst, The menacing hand, and evil speech, And you offer your compassion to the hungry And satisfy the famished creature— Then shall your light shine in darkness, And your gloom shall be like noonday.

Kiddushin 40b

עשה מצוה אחת אשריו שהכריע עצמו לכף זכות

[The person should act as though the plates of their scale is balanced, so that if] the person performs one mitzvah they are fortunate, as they tilt their balance to the scale of merit.

2 What's the first gift you want to make as part of this Kapparat ritual? Use your value, above, to help decide where to give. And remember, this is just a starting point!

Give to: _____

Amount of gift: _____

The traditional Kapparat gift is a minimum of \$18, if that's accessible.

3 Time for the Kapparat Ritual

Place the money you are donating into a pouch or handkerchief.

No cash? No problem. Write the amount you're giving on a piece of paper and place it in the pouch with a few coins instead.

Swing the pouch or handkerchief over your head three times as you repeat:

זה חליפתי, זה תמורתי, זה כפרתי.
זה הכסף ילך לצדקה, ואני אכנס
ואלך לחיים טובים ארוכים ולשלום

Zeh chalifati, Zeh temurati,
Zeh kaparti Zeh kesef yei'leych
li'tzedakah, va'ani ei'ley'ch l'chai'im
tov'im aruch'im ule'shalom.

This is my exchange, this is my
substitute, this is my expiation.
This money will go to tzedakah
and I will enter and proceed to a
good, long life and to peace.

* You can also swing the money over someone else's head, especially if you are doing this with kids.

This ritual is a symbolic step. Jewish sages stressed that action is required for true repentance or teshuvah, on Yom Kippur and all year long.

Find out more about teshuvah:

myjewishlearning.com/article/spiraling-towards-repentance

4 Donate your gift!

Find the organization you want to give to online and click their donate button.

DONATE

Let this ritual guide your tzedakah journey this year!

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