

# Yom Kippur

**Yom Kippur** (/ˌjɒm kɪˈpʊər, ˌjɔːm ˈkɪpər, ˌjoʊm-/ <sup>[1]</sup> Hebrew: יום כיפור, IPA: [ˈjom kiˈpuʁ], or **יום הכיפורים**), also known as the **Day of Atonement**, is the holiest day of the year in Judaism.<sup>[2]</sup> Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with an approximate 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services.

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## Etymology

*Yom* (יום) means 'day' in Hebrew and *Kippur* (כּיפּוּר) comes from a root that means 'to atone'. Yom Kippur is usually expressed in English as "Day of Atonement".

### Yom Kippur



*Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur*, by Maurycy Gottlieb (1878)

<b>Official name</b>	יום כיפור
<b>Observed by</b>	Jews, Samaritans
<b>Type</b>	Jewish
<b>Significance</b>	Atonement for personal and national sins, fate of each person is sealed for the upcoming year
<b>Observances</b>	Fasting, prayer, abstaining from physical pleasures, refraining from work
<b>Date</b>	10th day of Tishrei
<b>2019 date</b>	Sunset, 8 October – nightfall, 9 October
<b>2020 date</b>	Sunset, 27 September – nightfall, 28 September
<b>2021 date</b>	Sunset, 15 September – nightfall, 16 September

*Kippur* can also mean to cleanse, with the Yom Kippur procedures in the Temple cleansing the people of sin.

<b>2022 date</b>	Sunset, 4 October – nightfall, 5 October
<b>Related to</b>	<u>Rosh Hashanah</u> , which precedes Yom Kippur

## Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is "the tenth day of [the] seventh month"<sup>[3]</sup> (Tishrei) and is regarded as the "Sabbath of Sabbaths". Rosh Hashanah (referred to in the Torah as *Yom Teruah*) is the first day of that month according to the Hebrew calendar. On this day forgiveness of sins is also asked of God.

Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days or *Yamim Nora'im* ("Days of Awe") that commences with Rosh Hashanah.

### Heavenly books opened

According to Jewish tradition, God inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into a book, the Book of Life, on Rosh Hashanah, and waits until Yom Kippur to "seal" the verdict. During the Days of Awe, a Jew tries to amend their behavior and seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God (*bein adam leMakom*) and against other human beings (*bein adam lechavero*). The evening and day of Yom Kippur are set aside for public and private petitions and confessions of guilt (*Vidui*). At the end of Yom Kippur, one hopes that they have been forgiven by God.

## Prayer service

The Yom Kippur prayer service includes several unique aspects. One is the actual number of prayer services. Unlike a regular day, which has three prayer services (*Ma'ariv*, the evening prayer; *Shacharit*, the morning prayer; and *Mincha*, the afternoon prayer), or a Shabbat or Yom Tov, which have four prayer services (*Ma'ariv*; *Shacharit*; *Mussaf*, the additional prayer; and *Mincha*), Yom Kippur has five prayer services (*Ma'ariv*; *Shacharit*; *Musaf*; *Mincha*; and *Ne'ilah*, the closing prayer). The prayer services also include private and public confessions of sins (*Vidui*) and a unique prayer dedicated to the special Yom Kippur *avodah* (service) of the Kohen Gadol (high priest) in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

## Observance

As one of the most culturally significant Jewish holidays, Yom Kippur is observed by many secular Jews who may not observe other holidays. Many secular Jews attend synagogue on Yom Kippur—for many secular Jews the High Holy Days are the only times of the year during which they attend synagogue<sup>[4]</sup>—causing synagogue attendance to soar.

### Preceding day

*Erev Yom Kippur* (lit. "eve [of] day [of] atonement") is the day preceding Yom Kippur, corresponding to the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. This day is commemorated with additional morning prayers, asking others for forgiveness, giving charity, performing the kapparot ritual, an extended afternoon prayer service, and two festive meals.<sup>[5]</sup>

### General observances

Leviticus 16:29 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0316.htm#29>) mandates establishment of this holy day on the 10th day of the 7th month as the day of atonement for sins. It calls it the Sabbath of Sabbaths and a day upon which one must afflict one's soul.



*On the eve of Yom Kippur* by Jakub Weinles

Leviticus 23:27 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0323.htm#27>) decrees that Yom Kippur is a strict day of rest.

Five additional prohibitions are traditionally observed, as detailed in the Jewish oral tradition (*Mishnah* tractate *Yoma* 8:1).

The number five is a set number, relating to:

1. In the Yom Kippur section of the Torah, the word *soul* appears five times.
2. The soul is known by five separate names: soul, wind, spirit, living one and unique one.
3. Unlike regular days, which have three prayer services, Yom Kippur has five- Maariv, Shacharit, Mussaf, Minchah and Neilah
4. The Kohen Gadol rinsed himself in the mikveh (ritual bath) five times on Yom Kippur.<sup>[6]</sup>

The prohibitions are the following:

1. No eating and drinking
2. No wearing of leather shoes
3. No bathing or washing
4. No anointing oneself with perfumes or lotions
5. No marital relations

A parallel has been drawn between these activities and the human condition according to the Biblical account of the expulsion from the garden of Eden.<sup>[7]</sup> Refraining from these symbolically represents a return to a pristine state, which is the theme of the day. By refraining from these activities, the body is uncomfortable but can still survive. The soul is considered to be the life force in a body. Therefore, by making one's body uncomfortable, one's soul is uncomfortable.<sup>[7]</sup> By feeling pain one can feel how others feel when they are in pain.<sup>[8]</sup> This is the purpose of the prohibitions.

Total abstention from food and drink as well as keeping the other traditions begins at sundown, and ends after nightfall the following day. One should add a few minutes to the beginning and end of the day, called *tosefet Yom Kippur*, lit. "addition to Yom Kippur". Although the fast is required of all healthy men over 13 or women over 12, it is waived in the case of certain medical conditions.

Virtually all Jewish holidays involve meals, but since Yom Kippur involves fasting, Jewish law requires one to eat a large and festive meal on the afternoon before Yom Kippur, after the *Mincha* (afternoon) prayer. This meal is meant to make up for the inability to eat a large meal on the day of Yom Kippur instead, due to the prohibition from eating or drinking.

Wearing white clothing (or a kittel for Ashkenazi Jews), is traditional to symbolize one's purity on this day. Many Orthodox men immerse themselves in a mikveh on the day before Yom Kippur.<sup>[9]</sup>

In order to gain atonement from God, one must:<sup>[6]</sup>

1. Pray
2. Repent of one's sins
3. Give to charity

## Eve

Before sunset on Yom Kippur eve, worshipers gather in the synagogue. The Ark is opened and two people take from it two Sifrei Torah (Torah scrolls). Then they take their places, one on each side of the Hazzan, and the three recite (in Hebrew):

In the tribunal of Heaven and the tribunal of earth, we hold it lawful to pray with transgressors.

The cantor then chants the Kol Nidre prayer (Aramaic: כל נדרי, English translation: "All vows"). It is recited in Aramaic. Its name "Kol Nidre" is taken from the opening words, and translates "All vows":

All personal vows we are likely to make, all personal oaths and pledges we are likely to take between this Yom Kippur and the next Yom Kippur, we publicly renounce. Let them all be relinquished and abandoned, null and void, neither firm nor established. Let our personal vows, pledges and oaths be considered neither vows nor pledges nor oaths.<sup>[10]</sup>

The leader and the congregation then say together three times "May all the people of Israel be forgiven, including all the strangers who live in their midst, for all the people are in fault." The Torah scrolls are then placed back into the Ark, and the Yom Kippur evening service begins.

## Prayer services

Many married Ashkenazi Orthodox men wear a *kittel*, a white robe-like garment for evening prayers on Yom Kippur, otherwise used by men on their wedding day.<sup>[11][12]</sup> They also wear a tallit (prayer shawl), which is typically worn only during morning services.<sup>[13]</sup>

Prayer services begin with the Kol Nidre prayer, which is recited before sunset. Kol Nidre is a prayer that dates back to 9th century Palestine. It is recited in a dramatic manner, before the open ark, using a melody that dates back to the 16th century.<sup>[14]</sup> Then the service continues with the evening prayers (*Ma'ariv* or *Arvit*) and an extended Selichot service.

The morning prayer service is preceded by litanies and petitions of forgiveness called *selichot*; on Yom Kippur, many *selichot* are woven into the liturgy of the mahzor (prayer book). The morning prayers are followed by an added prayer (*Mussaf*) as on all other holidays. This is followed by *Mincha* (the afternoon prayer) which includes a reading (Haftarah) of the entire Book of Jonah, which has as its theme the story of God's willingness to forgive those who repent.

The service concludes with the Ne'ila ("closing") prayer, which begins shortly before sunset, when the "gates of prayer" will be closed. Yom Kippur comes to an end with a recitation of Shema Yisrael and the blowing of the shofar,<sup>[15]</sup> which marks the conclusion of the fast.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Reform Judaism

Reform synagogues generally experience their largest attendance of the year on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah for worship services. The prayer philosophy of Reform, as described in the introduction of the movement's High Holy Day prayerbook, "Mishkan Hanefesh", is to reflect "varied theological approaches that enable a diverse congregation to share religious experience... with a commitment to Reform tradition, as well as [to] the larger Jewish tradition." A central feature of Reform these services is the rabbinic sermon. "For more than a century and a half in the Reform Movement," writes Rabbi Lance Sussman, "High Holiday sermons were among the most anticipated events in synagogue life, especially on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre night."<sup>[16]</sup>

## Repentance (*Teshuva*) and confessional (*Vidui*)

The Talmud states, "Yom Kippur atones for those who repent and does not atone for those who do not repent."<sup>[17]</sup> Repentance in Judaism is done through a process called Teshuva, which in its most basic form consists of regretting having committed the sin, resolving not to commit that sin in the future and to confess that sin before God. Confession

in Judaism is called *Vidui* (Hebrew וִידוּי). There is also a commandment to repent on Yom Kippur.<sup>[18]</sup> Accordingly, Yom Kippur is unique for the confessional, or *Vidui*, that is part of the prayer services. In keeping with the requirement to repent on Yom Kippur, Jews recite the full *Vidui* a total of 9 times: once during Mincha on Yom Kippur eve, and on Yom Kippur itself during Ma'ariv (2 times), Shacharit (2 times), Musaf (2 times), and Mincha (2 times); at Ne'eilah, only the short confessional is said. The first time in each service takes place during the personal recitation of the *Amidah* (standing, silent prayer), and the second time during the cantor's repetition of the *Amidah* (except during the preceding Mincha), in a public recitation.

The Yom Kippur confessional consists of two parts: a short confession beginning with the word *Ashamnu* (אֲשָׁמְנוּ, "we have sinned"), which is a series of words describing sin arranged according to the aleph-bet (Hebrew alphabetic order), and a long confession, beginning with the words *Al Cheyt* (עַל הַטֵּא, "for the sin"), which is a set of 22 double acrostics, also arranged according to the aleph-bet, enumerating a range of sins.

## Avodah: remembering the Temple service

A recitation of the sacrificial service of the Temple in Jerusalem traditionally features prominently in both the liturgy and the religious thought of the holiday. Specifically, the *Avodah* ("service") in the Musaf prayer recounts in great detail the sacrificial ceremonies of the Yom Kippur *Korbanot* (sacrificial offerings) that are recited in the prayers but have not been performed for 2,000 years, since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans.

This traditional prominence is rooted in the Babylonian Talmud's description of how to attain atonement following the destruction of the Temple. According to Talmud tractate *Yoma*, in the absence of a Temple, Jews are obligated to study the High Priest's ritual on Yom Kippur, and this study helps achieve atonement for those who are unable to benefit from its actual performance. In Orthodox Judaism, accordingly, studying the Temple ritual on Yom Kippur represents a positive rabbinically ordained obligation which Jews seeking atonement are required to fulfill.

In Orthodox synagogues and many Conservative ones a detailed description of the Temple ritual is recited on the day. In most Orthodox and some Conservative synagogues, the entire congregation prostrates themselves at each point in the recitation where the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) would pronounce the Tetragrammaton (God's holiest name, according to Judaism).

The main section of the *Avodah* is a threefold recitation of the High Priest's actions regarding expiation in the Holy of Holies. Performing the sacrificial acts and reciting Leviticus 16:30 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0316.htm#30>), ("Your upright children"). (These three times, plus in some congregations the *Aleinu* prayer during the Musaf *Amidah* on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, are the only times in Jewish services when Jews engage in prostration, with the exception of some Yemenite Jews and *talmedhei haRambam* (disciples of Maimonides) who may prostrate themselves on other occasions during the year. A variety of liturgical poems are added, including a poem recounting the radiance of the countenance of the Kohen Gadol after exiting the Holy of Holies, traditionally believed to emit palpable light in a manner echoing the Torah's account of the countenance of Moses after descending from Mount Sinai, as well as prayers for the speedy rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of sacrificial worship. There are a variety of other customs, such as hand gestures to mime the sprinkling of blood (one sprinkling upwards and seven downwards per set of eight).<sup>[19]</sup>

Orthodox liturgies include prayers lamenting the inability to perform the Temple service and petitioning for its restoration, which Conservative synagogues generally omit. In some Conservative synagogues, only the *Hazzan* (cantor) engages in full prostration. Some Conservative synagogues abridge the recitation of the *Avodah* service to varying degrees, and some omit it entirely. Reconstructionist services omit the entire service as inconsistent with modern sensibilities.

## Date of Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur falls each year on the 10th day of the Jewish month of Tishrei, which is 9 days after the first day of Rosh Hashanah. In terms of the Gregorian calendar, the earliest date on which Yom Kippur can fall is September 14, as happened most recently in 1899 and 2013. The latest Yom Kippur can occur relative to the Gregorian dates is on

October 14, as happened in 1967 and will happen again in 2043. After 2089, the differences between the Hebrew calendar and the Gregorian calendar will result in Yom Kippur falling no earlier than September 15.<sup>[20]</sup> Gregorian calendar dates for recent and upcoming Yom Kippur holidays are:

- Sunset, 29 September 2017 – nightfall, 30 September 2017
- Sunset, 18 September 2018 – nightfall, 19 September 2018
- Sunset, 8 October 2019 – nightfall, 9 October 2019
- Sunset, 27 September 2020 – nightfall, 28 September 2020
- Sunset, 15 September 2021 – nightfall, 16 September 2021
- Sunset, 4 October 2022 – nightfall, 5 October 2022
- Sunset, 24 September 2023 – nightfall, 25 September 2023
- Sunset, 11 October 2024 – nightfall, 12 October 2024

## In the Torah

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The Torah calls the day *Yom HaKippurim* (יום הכיפורים) and in it Leviticus 23:27 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0323.htm#27>) decrees a strict prohibition of work and affliction of the soul upon the tenth day of the seventh month, later known as Tishrei. The laws of Yom Kippur are mentioned in three passages in the Torah:

1. Leviticus 16:1–34 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0316.htm#1>): God told Moses to tell Aaron that he can only enter the sanctuary in front of the cover that is on the ark when God is present on the cover in a cloud. If Aaron is to enter otherwise, he will die. On the tenth day of the seventh month, God said that the people must not work in order to cleanse and atone for their sins. The Kohen will lead in the atonement of all the people.
2. Leviticus 23:26–32 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0323.htm#26>): God said to Moses that the tenth day of the month is the day of atonement and will be holy. The people must give a fire-offering to God and must not work. God told Moses that whoever does work, God will rid of the soul from its people. This is a day of complete rest from the evening of the ninth day of the month to the following evening.
3. Numbers 29:7–11 (<https://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0429.htm#7>): The tenth day of the seventh month is a holy day and one must not work. For an elevation offering, one must sacrifice a young bull, a ram and seven lambs who are a year old. As well, for a sin offering, one must sacrifice a male goat.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Midrashic interpretation

Traditionally, Yom Kippur is considered the date on which Moses received the second set of Ten Commandments. It occurred following the completion of the second 40 days of instructions from God. At this same time, the Israelites were granted atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf; hence, its designation as the Day of Atonement.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Mishnaic and Talmudic literature

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### Temple service

The following summary of the Temple service is based on the traditional Jewish religious account described in Mishnah tractate Yoma, appearing in contemporary traditional Jewish prayer books for Yom Kippur, and studied as part of a traditional Jewish Yom Kippur worship service.<sup>[19]</sup>

While the Temple in Jerusalem was standing (from Biblical times through 70 CE), the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) was mandated by the Torah to perform a complex set of special services and sacrifices for Yom Kippur to attain Divine atonement, the word "kippur" meaning "atone" in Hebrew. These services were considered to be the most important parts of Yom Kippur because through them the Kohen Gadol made atonement for all Jews and the world. During the

service, the Kohen Gadol entered the Holy of Holies in the center of the Temple, the only time of the year that anyone went inside. Doing so required special purification and preparation, including five immersions in a mikvah (ritual bath), and four changes of clothing.

Seven days prior to Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol was sequestered in the Palhedrin chamber in the Temple, where he reviewed (studied) the service with the sages familiar with the Temple, and was sprinkled with spring water containing ashes of the Red Heifer as purification. The Talmud (Tractate Yoma) also reports that he practiced the incense offering ritual in the Avitnas chamber.

On the day of Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol had to follow a precise order of services, sacrifices, and purifications:

- **Morning (Tamid) Offering** The Kohen Gadol first performed the regular daily (*Tamid*) offering—usually performed by ordinary priests—in special golden garments, after immersing in a mikvah and washing his hands and feet.
- **Garment Change 1** The Kohen Gadol immersed in a special mikvah in the Temple courtyard and changed into special linen garments, and washed his hands and feet twice, once after removing the golden garments and once before putting on the linen garments.
- **Bull as Personal Sin-Offering** The Kohen Gadol leaned (performed Semikha) and made a confession over the bull on behalf of himself and his household, pronouncing the Tetragrammaton. The people prostrated themselves when they heard. He then slaughtered the bull as a *chatat* (sin-offering) and received its blood in a bowl.
- **Lottery of the goats** At the Eastern (Nikanor) gate, the Kohen Gadol drew lots from a lottery box over two goats. One was selected "for the Lord", and one "for Azazel". The Kohen Gadol tied a red band around the horns of the goat "for Azazel".
- **Incense Preparation** The Kohen Gadol ascended the mizbeach (altar) and took a shovel full of embers with a special shovel. He was brought incense. He filled his hands and placed it in a vessel. (The Talmud considered this the most physically difficult part of the service, as the Kohen Gadol had to keep the shovelful of glowing coals balanced and prevent its contents from dropping, using his armpit or teeth, while filling his hands with the incense.)
- **Incense Offering** Holding the shovel and the vessel, he entered the Kadosh Hakadashim, the Temple's Holy of Holies. In the days of the First Temple, he placed the shovel between the poles of the Ark of the Covenant. In the days of the Second Temple, he put the shovel where the Ark would have been. He waited until the chamber filled with smoke and left.
- **Sprinkling of Bull's Blood in the Holy of Holies** The Kohen Gadol took the bowl with the bull's blood and entered the Most Holy Place again. He sprinkled the bull's blood with his finger eight times, before the Ark in the days of the First Temple, where it would have been in the days of the Second. The Kohen Gadol then left the Holy of Holies, putting the bowl on a stand in front of the Parochet (curtain separating the Holy from the Holy of Holies).
- **Goat for the Lord as Sin-Offering for Kohanim** The Kohen Gadol went to the eastern end of the Israelite courtyard near the Nikanor Gate, laid his hands (semikha) on the goat "for the Lord", and pronounced confession on behalf of the Kohanim (priests). The people prostrated themselves when he pronounced the Tetragrammaton. He then slaughtered the goat, and received its blood in another bowl.
- **Sprinkling of Goat's Blood in the Holy of Holies** The Kohen Gadol took the bowl with the goat's blood and entered the Kadosh Hakadashim again. He sprinkled the goat's blood with his finger eight times the same way he had sprinkled the bull's blood. The blood was sprinkled before the Ark in the days of the First Temple, where it would have been in the days of the Second Temple. The Kohen Gadol then left the Kadosh Hakadashim, putting the bowl on a stand in front of the Parochet (curtain separating the Holy from the Holy of Holies).
- **Sprinkling of blood in the Holy** Standing in the Hekhal (Holy), on the other side of the Parochet from the Holy of Holies, the Kohen Gadol took the bull's blood from the stand and sprinkled it with his finger eight times in the direction of the Parochet. He then took the bowl with the goat's blood and sprinkled it eight times in the same manner, putting it back on the stand.
- **Smearing of blood on the Golden (Incense) Altar** The Kohen Gadol removed the goat's blood from the stand and mixed it with the bull's blood. Starting at the northeast corner, he then smeared the mixture of blood on each of the four corners of the Golden (Incense) altar in the Haichal. He then sprinkled the blood eight times on the altar.

- **Goat for Azazel** The Kohen Gadol left the Haichal and walked to the east side of the *Azarah* (Israelite courtyard). Near the Nikanor Gate, he leaned his hands (*Semikha*) on the goat "for Azazel" and confessed the sins of the entire people of Israel. The people prostrated themselves when he pronounced the Tetragrammaton. While he made a general confession, individuals in the crowd at the Temple would confess privately. The Kohen Gadol then sent the goat off "to the wilderness". In practice, to prevent its return to human habitation, the goat was led to a cliff outside Jerusalem and pushed off its edge.



Cliffs of [Mount Azazel](#)

- **Preparation of sacrificial animals** While the goat "for Azazel" was being led to the cliff, the Kohen Gadol removed the insides of the bull and intertwined the bodies of the bull and goat. Other people took the bodies to the *Beit HaDeshen* (place of the ashes). They were burned there after it was confirmed that the goat "for Azazel" had reached the wilderness.
- **Reading the Torah** After it was confirmed that the goat "for Azazel" had been pushed off the cliff, the Kohen Gadol passed through the Nikanor Gate into the *Ezrat Nashim* (Women's Courtyard) and read sections of the *Torah* describing Yom Kippur and its sacrifices.
- **Garment change 2** The Kohen Gadol removed his linen garments, immersed in the *mikvah* in the Temple courtyard, and changed into a second set of special golden garments. He washed his hands and feet both before removing the linen garments and after putting on the golden ones.
- **Offering of Rams** The Kohen Gadol offered two rams as an *olah* offering, slaughtering them on the north side of the *mizbeach* (outer altar), receiving their blood in a bowl, carrying the bowl to the outer altar, and dashing the blood on the northeast and southwest corners of the Outer Altar. He dismembered the rams and burned the parts entirely on the outer altar. He then offered the accompanying mincha (grain) offerings and *nesachim* (wine-libations).
- **Musaf Offering** The Kohen Gadol then offered the Musaf offering.
- **Burning of Innards** The Kohen Gadol placed the insides of the bull and goat on the outer altar and burned them entirely.
- **Garment change 3** The Kohen Gadol removed his golden garments, immersed in the *mikvah*, and changed to a new set of linen garments, again washing his hands and feet twice.
- **Removal of Incense from the Holy of Holies** The Kohen Gadol returned to the Holy of Holies and removed the bowl of incense and the shovel.
- **Garment Change 4** The Kohen Gadol removed his linen garments, immersed in the *mikvah*, and changed into a third set of golden garments, again washing his hands and feet twice.
- **Evening (Tamid) Offering** The Kohen Gadol completed the afternoon portion of the regular (*tamid*) daily offering in the special golden garments. He washed his hands and feet a tenth time.

The Kohen Gadol wore five sets of garments (three golden and two white linen), immersed in the *mikvah* five times, and washed his hands and feet ten times. Sacrifices included two (daily) lambs, one bull, two goats, and two rams, with accompanying *mincha* (meal) offerings, wine libations, and three incense offerings (the regular two daily and an additional one for Yom Kippur). The Kohen Gadol entered the Holy of Holies four times. The Tetragrammaton was pronounced three times, once for each confession.<sup>[19]</sup>

## Observance in Israel

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Yom Kippur is a legal holiday in the modern state of Israel. There are no radio or television broadcasts, airports are shut down, there is no public transportation, and all shops and businesses are closed.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 2013, 73% of the Jewish people of Israel said that they were intending to fast on Yom Kippur.<sup>[23]</sup> It is very common in Israel to wish "Tsom Kal" ([an] easy fast) or "Tsom Mo'il" ([a] benefiting fast) to everyone before Yom Kippur, even if one does not know whether they will fast or not.



It is considered impolite to eat in public on Yom Kippur or to sound music or to drive a motor vehicle. There is no legal prohibition on any of these, but in practice such actions are universally avoided in Israel during Yom Kippur,<sup>[24]</sup> except for emergency services.

Over the last few decades, bicycle-riding and inline skating on the empty streets have become common among secular Israeli youngsters, especially on the eve of Yom Kippur in Tel Aviv<sup>[25]</sup> and Israel in general.

In 1973, an air raid siren was sounded on the afternoon of Yom Kippur and radio broadcasts were resumed to alert the public to the surprise attack on Israel by Egypt and Syria that launched the Yom Kippur War.



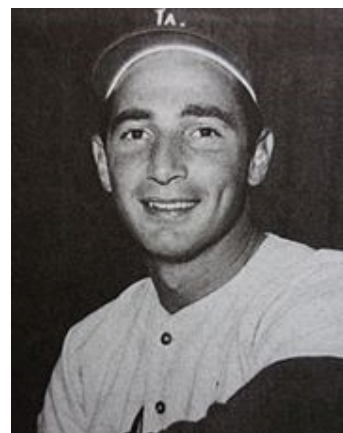
Ayalon Highway in Tel Aviv, empty of cars on Yom Kippur 2004

## **Observance by athletes**

Some notable athletes have observed Yom Kippur, even when it conflicted with playing their sport.

In baseball, Sandy Koufax, the Hall of Fame pitcher, decided not to pitch Game 1 of the 1965 World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur. Koufax garnered national attention for his decision, as an example of the conflict between social pressures and personal beliefs.<sup>[26]</sup>

Hall of Fame first baseman Hank Greenberg attracted national attention in 1934, nearly three decades earlier, when he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur, even though the Tigers were in the middle of a pennant race, and he was leading the league in RBIs.<sup>[27]</sup> The *Detroit Free Press* columnist and poet Edgar A. Guest wrote a poem titled "Speaking of Greenberg", which ended with the lines "*We shall miss him on the infield and shall miss him at the bat / But he's true to his religion—and I honor him for that.*"<sup>[28]</sup> When Greenberg arrived in synagogue on Yom Kippur, the service stopped suddenly, and the congregation gave an embarrassed Greenberg a standing ovation.<sup>[29]</sup>



Sandy Koufax

Former Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Shawn Green, similarly, made headlines in 2001 for sitting out a game for the first time in 415 games (then the longest streak among active players), to honor Yom Kippur, even though his team was in the middle of a playoff race.<sup>[27]</sup> Other baseball players who have similarly sat out games on Yom Kippur include former Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees third baseman Kevin Youkilis, former Houston Astros catcher and former Los Angeles Angels manager Brad Ausmus, and outfielder Art Shamsky.<sup>[30][31][32]</sup>



Gabe Carimi

Gabe Carimi, the Consensus All-American left tackle in American football who won the 2010 Outland Trophy as the nation's top collegiate interior lineman, faced a conflict in his freshman year of college in 2007. That year Yom Kippur fell on a Saturday, and he fasted until an hour before his football game against Iowa started that night.<sup>[33][34][35]</sup> Carimi said, "Religion is a part of me, and I don't want to just say I'm Jewish. I actually do make sacrifices that I know are hard choices."<sup>[33][36][37]</sup> In 2004, Matt Bernstein, standout fullback at University of Wisconsin–Madison, fasted on Yom Kippur, then broke his fast on the sidelines before rushing for 123 yards in a game against Penn State.<sup>[38]</sup>

In 2011, golfer Laetitia Beck declined a request to join the UNC Tar-Heels Invitational competition, because it conflicted with Yom Kippur.<sup>[39][40]</sup> Instead, she spent the day fasting and praying.<sup>[39]</sup> She said: "My Judaism is very important to me, and ... on Yom Kippur, no matter what, I have to fast."<sup>[39]</sup> Boris Gelfand, Israel's top chess player, played his game in the prestigious London Grand Prix Chess Tournament on 25 September 2012 (eve of Yom Kippur) earlier, to avoid playing on the holiday.<sup>[41]</sup>

In 2013, the International Tennis Federation fined the Israel Tennis Association "more than \$13,000 ... for the inconvenience" of having to reschedule a tennis match between the Israeli and Belgian teams that was originally scheduled on Yom Kippur.<sup>[42][43]</sup> Dudi Sela, Israel's # 1 player, quit his quarterfinal match in the third set of the 2017 Shenzhen Open so he could begin observing Yom Kippur by the time the sun set, forfeiting a possible \$34,000 in prize money and 90 rankings points.<sup>[44][45]</sup>

Professional wrestler Bill Goldberg has notably refused to wrestle a match on Yom Kippur.

## Recognition by the United Nations

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Starting 2016 the United Nations officially recognizes Yom Kippur, stating that from then on no official meetings would take place on the day.<sup>[46]</sup> As well, the United Nations stated that, beginning in 2016, they would have nine official holidays and seven floating holidays which each employee would be able to choose one of.<sup>[46]</sup> It stated that the floating holidays will be Yom Kippur,<sup>[47]</sup> Day of Vesak, Diwali, Gurpurab, Orthodox Christmas, Orthodox Good Friday, and Presidents' Day.<sup>[46]</sup> This was the first time the United Nations officially recognized any Jewish holiday.<sup>[46]</sup>

## Modern scholarship

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According to textual scholars, the biblical regulations covering Yom Kippur are spliced together from multiple source texts,<sup>[48][49]</sup> as indicated by the duplication of the confession over the bullock,<sup>[50]</sup> and the incongruity in one verse stating that the high priest should not enter the Holy of Holies (with the inference that there are exceptions for certain explicitly identified festivals),<sup>[51]</sup> and the next verse indicating that they can enter whenever they wish (as long as a specific ritual is carried out first).<sup>[48]</sup> Although Rashi tried to find a harmonistic explanation for this incongruity, the Leviticus Rabbah maintains that it was indeed the case that the high priest could enter at any time if these rituals were carried out.<sup>[52]</sup> Textual scholars argue that the ritual is composed from three sources, and a couple of redactional additions:<sup>[48][49]</sup>

- prerequisite rituals before the high priest can enter the Holy of Holies (on any occasion), namely a sin offering and a whole offering, followed by the filling of the Holy of Holies with a cloud of incense while wearing linen garments<sup>[53]</sup>
- regulations which establish an annual day of fasting and rest, during which the sanctuary and people are purified, without stating the ritual for doing so,<sup>[54]</sup> this regulation is very similar to the one in the Holiness Code<sup>[55]</sup>
- later elaborations of the ceremony,<sup>[56]</sup> which include the sprinkling of the blood on the *mercy seat*, and the use of a scapegoat sent to Azazel; the same source also being responsible for small alterations to related regulations<sup>[57]</sup>
- the redactional additions<sup>[58]</sup>

On the basis of their assumptions, these scholars believe that the original ceremony was simply the ritual purification of the sanctuary from any accidental ritual impurity, at the start of each new year, as seen in the Book of Ezekiel. Textual scholars date this original ceremony to before the priestly source, but after JE.<sup>[48][59]</sup> According to the Book of Ezekiel, the sanctuary was to be cleansed by the sprinkling of bullock's blood, on the first day of the first and of the seventh months<sup>[60]</sup>—near the start of the civil year and of the ecclesiastical year, respectively; although the masoretic text of the Book of Ezekiel has the second of these cleansings on the seventh of the first month, biblical scholars regard the Septuagint, which has the second cleaning as being the first of the seventh month, as being more accurate here.<sup>[48]</sup>