

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the most important day of the year for Jewish people. This festival takes place in September or October, 10 days after Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year). Between the first and tenth day of the new year, Jews say sorry for any bad things they have done and ask for forgiveness from those they have upset. Jewish people believe that if they do this, they will be forgiven by God.

Adults and older children 'fast' (don't eat or drink) from sunset the night before Yom Kippur, until nightfall the following day. A feast is served the day before to make fasting easier. Children under 9 do not have to fast and, depending on medical advice, neither do women expecting a baby or people who are ill. Children aged between 9 and 12 eat and drink less than usual.

Here is a list of other things that Jewish people are not allowed to do on Yom Kippur:

- No leather shoes can be worn.
- No washing (e.g. no baths or showers).
- No perfumes or lotions can be used.



During Yom Kippur, families spend most of the day praying in the synagogue. Those who are married are supposed to wear a special robe called a kittel. Many Jews wear white clothing on the day. At the end of Yom Kippur, the priest blows the shofar (ram's horn) to let everyone know it is the end of the festival.

Yom Kippur

Also known as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur is one of the most important days of the Hebrew year. Yom Kippur falls in September or October on the eve of the 10th day of the Jewish New Year. The first day of the New Year is Rosh Hashanah. According to the Jewish faith, this is the day when God decides each person's fate. Between the first and tenth day of the year, Jews confess their guilt and ask friends and enemies for forgiveness. Jews also ask God for forgiveness.

During the 25 hours of Yom Kippur, Jewish families spend most of the day praying in the synagogue. Adults 'fast' from sunset the night before Yom Kippur, until nightfall the following day. A large feast is served the day before. This makes fasting easier. Children under 9 do not have to fast and, depending on medical advice, neither do women expecting a baby or people who are ill. Children between 9 and 12 eat and drink less than usual. Besides not eating and drinking, Jews are not allowed to wear leather shoes, bathe or wear perfumes or lotions on Yom Kippur. In Israel, where Judaism is the main religion, there is no TV, no radio and no public transportation in use on this day. Most Jews also don't work or drive that day.



Jewish people look forward to this holiday every year. Yom Kippur is an annual opportunity to make peace with God. After following the rituals, Jews feel a sense of peace and optimism. Married Jews are supposed to wear a special robe on Yom Kippur called a kittel. This is also the robe that Jews are buried in. Some Jews just wear white clothing on Yom Kippur. White is symbolic of angels. Jews who have confessed their guilt are like angels in heaven.

According to the Jewish faith, every Jew is responsible for the sins of others in the Jewish family. When they pray for forgiveness and confess their sins, Jewish people use "we" instead of "I". The Yom Kippur prayer service includes a prayer of thanks for blessings, followed by a promise to observe the rituals of Yom Kippur, and finally a confession of sins. Stories of God's forgiveness are shared and the Ark in the synagogue is opened. The Ark symbolises the gates of heaven being open for the Jewish people.

Did you know?

Refraining from drinking caffeine is recommended before fasting. A caffeine withdrawal can cause headaches and make it more difficult to observe the fast.

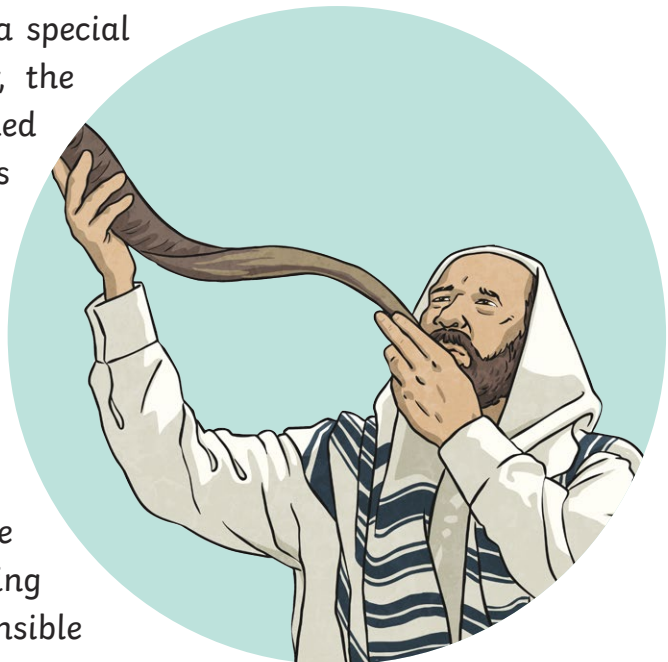
Yom Kippur

Also known as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur is the most sacred and solemn day of the Hebrew year. This festival falls in September or October, on the eve of the tenth day of the Jewish new year. The first day of the new year is Rosh Hashanah. Jews believe that at this time, God looks at each individual to see what they have done, good and bad, in the previous year. Between the first and tenth day of the Jewish new year, Jews confess their guilt and ask for forgiveness from anyone they have upset. This important period of time is known as the Days of Repentance or Days of Awe. If the individual has tried hard to be a good person and made friends with people they've wronged, Jewish people believe that they will be forgiven by God on Yom Kippur. Jewish people look forward to this holiday as it is an annual opportunity to make peace. After following the rituals, Jews feel a sense of optimism for the new year ahead.

Adults and older children fast from sunset the night before Yom Kippur, until nightfall the following day. A large feast is served the day before to make fasting easier. Children under 9 do not have to fast and, depending on medical advice, neither do women expecting a baby or people who are ill. Children aged between 9 and 12 eat and drink less than usual. Besides not eating and drinking, Jews are not allowed to wear leather shoes, bathe or wear perfumes or lotions on Yom Kippur. Jewish people follow these strict rules to show God that they are truly sorry for any wrongdoing in the last year. In Israel, where the majority of people are Jewish, there is no TV, no radio and no public transport in use. In addition to this, Jews don't work or drive on this special day.

Married Jews are supposed to wear a special robe called a kittel on Yom Kippur, the robe which Jewish people are buried in. Some Jews wear white clothing as a symbol of purity. White clothing is also symbolic of angels as those who have confessed their guilt are like angels in heaven.

On Yom Kippur, Jewish families spend most of the day praying and meditating in the synagogue where there are five prayer services. According to the Jewish faith, every Jew is responsible



for the sins of others in the Jewish family so when they pray for forgiveness and confess their sins, Jewish people use 'we' instead of 'I'. The Yom Kippur prayer service includes a prayer of thanks for blessings, followed by a promise to observe the rituals of Yom Kippur and finally a confession of sins. Stories of God's forgiveness are shared and the Ark in the synagogue is opened. The Ark symbolises the gates of heaven being open for the Jewish people.

At the end of the day, the whole congregation recites the Shema and a few other verses out loud together, then the shofar (ram's horn) is sounded for one long blast to let everyone know it is the end of the festival.

Did you know?

- Yom Kippur has been observed for thousands of years by Jewish people. The day is mentioned several times in the Torah and the Bible.
- Refraining from drinking caffeine is recommended before fasting. A caffeine withdrawal can cause headaches and make it more difficult to observe the fast.
- With their mothers, Jewish girls light candles 18 minutes before sunset on the night before Yom Kippur. Blessings are also recited.
- The most common greeting heard at this festival is 'Have an easy fast!'.
- Another ritual involves the family throwing breadcrumbs into a body of water. The breadcrumbs represent their sins.

