

Community on Columbia

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, is the climax of the ten days of awe and is considered to be the most important day for the Jews in the liturgical year. Since the destruction of the temple, the various sacrifices that occurred on this day can no longer be accomplished; therefore, the modern Jews believe that the day itself atones for them. We, of course, believe that it is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone that atones.

There are 365 days in the solar year. In Hebrew, the numerical value of "the Satan" is 364. This alludes to the fact that on all days the Satan has the power to accuse Israel before God, but he is powerless on the Day of Atonement.

This is the one day a year that the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies which contained the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat and the Glory of God. It was believed that if the process didn't go right while he was inside the Holy of Holies, the world would be destroyed. Therefore, there was a great sense of awe connected with this feast. According to the Talmud, all feared for the High Priest's life. The people in the Temple were enveloped in awe, holiness and mystery. It is said that when the High Priest came out of the Holy of Holies, "He resembled in majesty a bright star emerging from between the clouds."

There is a total fast required from sundown to sundown. It is the only fast enjoined in the Torah. According to the Talmud, the following are the prohibitions:

- a) No eating of food of any kind.
- b) No drinking of water or any liquids of any kind.
- c) No washing with water on any part of the body.
- d) No anointing the body with anything.
- e) No combing the hair.
- f) No sex.
- g) For the zealous, not even removing the sleep from your eyes.

In addition to these, there will be a prohibition against cigarettes, cigars, pipes, music, radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.

Children under twelve are exempted from the fast, except that they are not to wear shoes.

“For whatever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.” (Lev. 23:29)

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The eighteen Amidah prayers were said five times during the day of the fast. This is believed to be the source for the Muslim custom of praying five times per day. Note: The Amidah will be distributed later.

For us the fast will be from sundown Saturday until sundown Sunday. This is the day each person should search their heart and seek forgiveness from one another. Just as for Christians, the Jews believe that there is atonement only for those who repent. True repentance is revealed when we can forgive from the heart everyone their trespasses. (Matt. 6: 9-15; 18; 21-35)

We believe that it was on Yom Kippur, just as the High Priest was sending the scapegoat out into the wilderness (Lev. 16), John the Baptist was saying about Jesus Christ, "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (A male lamb was never the sin offering according to the Law. Scholars believe the original text said, "Behold the goat of God...")

Another key element of Yom Kippur is the Kol Nedrei (Annulment of Vows) ceremony. This is where each person proclaims that all personal vows, oaths, goals, ambitions, unthinking words etc. that they had made, either wittingly or unwittingly, rashly or unknowingly during the year should be null and void as the dust of the earth. This became one of the most beloved rituals in all of Israel because it had the effect of alleviating all anxiety (compare Math. 5:33-37 and James 5: 7-16).

The Rabbis believe that several different things occurred on this day:

- 1) The Law was given to Moses the second time.
- 2) It was the day of Abraham's circumcision, according to some.
- 3) The day of the binding of Isaac.
- 4) The three young men were cast into the furnace.
- 5) The fire from the Lord consumed the two sons of Aaron (Lev. 10:1,2.)
- 6) The fire of God consumed 250 princes of Israel in Korah's rebellion (Nu.16:35.)
- 7) The day of Jesus Christ's baptism.

If we truly understand this feast, we should be once and for all purged and should have no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10:2). If not, we will have an evil conscience, a mind not at ease with God. A heart that thinks God has some demands or some requirements that are unsatisfied; the heart of a slave, dreading the demands of an austere master, instead of the heart of a child, trusting a loving Father.

All people, evil doers as well as those who are supposedly good, stand together to fear the Lord. All are cleansed---even the most wicked if he repents. The ceremony during the feast shows us our proper response today to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. From the beginning to the end of the ceremony, people looked on in silence---they did nothing---instead they "saw" the

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work was accomplished for them---but not by them, they had no hand in it. The only thing required was to know they were sinners and in that way afflict their souls (Lev. 19:29-31.) All He requires is a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 34:18; 147:3; 51:17.)

In the Jubilee year the shofar was sounded on the Day of Atonement to indicate the setting free of the slaves and the restoration of the property to their ancestral owners (Lev. 25: 9-10.)

At the end of the day's ceremony, the daughters of Jerusalem would go forth, dressed in white, and dance in the vineyards - "And what did they say? - 'Young man! Raise your eyes and behold what you choose for yourself' " (Tan 4: 8.) They had now received atonement, were cleansed from their sins, were dressed in white signifying the righteousness of Messiah and were prepared for the soon to arrive feast of Tabernacles, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 1-9.)

Readings: Lev. 16	Is. 57: 14 - 58: 14	Matt. 18: 21-35
Lev. 18	Jonah	Mark 1: 9-11
Lev. 23: 26-32	Micah 7: 18-20	Luke 3: 1-22
Lev. 25: 8-34	Matt. 3: 1-17	John 1: 1-34
Num. 29: 7-11	Matt. 6: 9-15	