

Meditations on *Yom Kippur*

“This will be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for Bnei-Yisrael once in the year because of all their sins.” (Lev. 16:34)

Yom Kippur in the Bible was the only day the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies and procured forgiveness for the sins of the nation and its citizens. Therefore, *Yom Kippur* is considered the holiest day of the Hebrew sacred year. After the ceremonies, the Aaronic benediction was pronounced with the sacred Name being spoken. It was the only time that the Name was actually verbalized.

Yom Kippur is a full public holiday in Israel, and almost all establishments will be closed. There will be no radio or television broadcasts, Ben Gurion International Airport will be closed and all public transportation will come to a halt and no one drives a car. *Yom Kippur* is a day of introspection, completely separate from the normal course of daily life; the physical aspects of life are sublimated while the Jewish people concentrate on spiritual concerns. According to *Halakhah* (traditional Jewish law), eating and drinking, the wearing of leather shoes, the use of make-up, bathing, and marital relations are forbidden throughout the fast. Our people are urged to participate in the fast and self-denial.

Some Classical Meditations on Yom Kippur

Therefore was a single human being created: to teach you that to destroy a single human soul is equivalent to destroying an entire world; and that to sustain a single human soul is equivalent to sustaining an entire world. And a single human being was created to keep peace among human beings, that no one might say to another: My lineage is greater than yours! *Mishnah*

At first sin is like a spider's web; in the end it becomes as thick as a ship's cable. At first it is a visitor; in the end it becomes the master of the house. *Midrash*

For transgressions against God, the Day of Atonement atones; but for transgressions of one human being against another, the Day of Atonement does not atone until they have made peace with one another. *Mishnah*

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 *John* 1:8-10

Who is truly repentant? The one who, when the temptation to sin is repeated, refrains from sinning. *Talmud*

How can a nation clear its conscience? Do the individuals who comprise such a nation have an opportunity to clear their conscience also? We have also inherited lies from our forefathers (Jer. 16:19) and many of you here tonight have succumbed to the pressure of the majority by calling good what the Lord has called evil and evil that which is from God. On this festival you and I have the chance to practice forgiveness and seek reconciliation with the Almighty on our behalf and on behalf of our nation.

We beseech You O God, based on the grace and on the atoning Blood of Yeshua our Messiah to make our transgressions of no effect, shatter them, and pull them down and destroy them. Would You, Almighty God, crush all the wicked schemes of Satan in our lives, in the lives of our families, in the lives of all the House of Israel and in our beloved United States of America? Let everyone say, “Amen!”