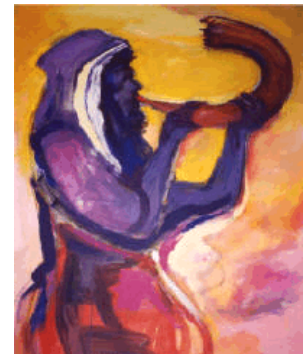


יּוֹם כִּפּוּר Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day of the year. In Bible times, it was the only day the Cohen HaGadol, the High Priest, went into the Holy of Holies and procured forgiveness for all sins. Lev 16:22 "The goat will carry on itself **all their sins** to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert." After the ceremonies were completed, the Aaronic benediction was pronounced using the sacred Name of G-d. It was the only time in the year that the Name was actually verbalized.

According to tradition, personal and national fates for the coming year are determined by the sincerity and depth of our repentance during the Ten Days of Awe. In Orthodox synagogue services, regular and penitential prayers, a recounting of the Holy Temple atonement service, and a public reading of the entire Book of Jonah, will last for most of the day. Our services will not be that long, but it will be a full worship service, followed by a prayer and confession time. One shofar blast will be sounded at sunset, marking the end of Yom Kippur.



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 close at 1:00 PM, and all public transportation will come to a halt by 3:00 PM. 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.

As believers in the Messiah, many among our congregation will fast and pray on Yom Kippur like the rest of the Jewish people, as the scripture enjoins us to "afflict your souls," (Lev. 23:27) but not to earn the atonement for our sins. Our full atonement and redemption was secured by the *Kipporah*, the sacrificial death of the Messiah, on our behalf. We will fast, and pray, as Yeshua instructs us (Mt. 9:16), for G-d's will to be done in our lives, for His blessing and protection to be upon the people of Israel, and for the *Ruakh HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, to open the eyes of our people to the riches of their salvation through the Messiah.



כָּל נִדְרֵי Kol Nidre

The erev Yom Kippur Service begins with the hauntingly beautiful melody of the Kol Nidre prayer, which is a plea to G-d to release us of bondages.

To understand the Kol Nidre prayer, and why it is so significant in the synagogue liturgy, one must have a view of the Medieval times in which it was composed.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, in the 400's of the Common Era (C.E.), persecution of the Jewish people declined in Europe, and life was relatively tolerable and secure. However, a religious fervor arose, that accompanied the inauguration of the Crusades, just after the year 1000. A great wave of aggressiveness came into the church. While G-d always has had a faithful remnant, the frenzied mobs that went to conquer the holy places from Islam, in the name of Christ, had no concept of the Kingdom of G-d. Furthermore, in the beginning of the 1200's Pope Innocent III officially recognized the doctrine of transubstantiation." With this doctrine, the charge of host desecration" was made against the Jews. That is, Jews were accused of torture and destruction of the communion wafer (which was believed to be the literal body of the Messiah), because Jews supposedly wanted to kill him again. This became a cause for attacks on Jewish villages. Therefore, conversion of the Jews was seen as an urgently needed spiritual goal for the church, and such methods as public debates over whether the Messiah has already come, and conversionist sermons by Catholic preachers, in the synagogues or in churches, with mandatory attendance by all Jews above age 12. By 1411, a Dominican friar, Vincent Ferrar, lead a mob through Castile on Shabbat, and seizing the Torah Scroll with one hand, and a crucifix in the other, offer the people the choice, "Baptism or death!" Some 70 other Spanish towns and cities had similar murders or forced conversions.

Under such pressure, some Jewish people made a nominal conversion to Catholicism. However, their consciences were plagued by their denial of Judaism and the G-d of the Torah. Their new found affiliation offered them no spiritual solace. Many secretly practiced some of the Jewish traditions. When they were discovered, they were considered heretical Christians, and put on trial. If they confessed and repented of their Judaizing heresy" they could be humiliatingly forgiven. If they refused, they were punished. Starting on Feb. 6, 1481, six men and six women were burned at the stake for their unrepentant backsliding into Judaism.

In a desperate attempt to clear their consciences, the Kol Nidre (All the Vows) prayer was composed.

This prayer is appropriate for Messianic believers, in that we also want to break our toxic vows. For example, most people have received wounds at the hands of

others, particularly in our childhood and youth, and we have purposed, "vowed" to "never be like ____." This antipathy, bitterness, and unforgiveness makes for a focus and hostility in our spirits that is very defiling. Yeshua came to fulfill Yeshayahu/Isaiah 61.1, as He quoted the verse when He read from the scroll in the synagogue in Natseret, as described in Luke 6. "The Spirit of Adoni is upon me, because he has sent me . . . to proclaim freedom for the imprisoned." It is powerful and liberating for us to enter into the Kol Nidre prayer, particularly with the midrashic version composed by Avner Boskey, with the focus on opening our hearts to the Ruakh, the Spirit, to release us from any bondages to unforgiveness or wrong habits of thought and heart.

Messianic Kol Nidre by Avner Boskey

All vows which we have made
To the forces of darkness,
All agreements,
All offerings of ourselves,
All unclean desires and secret promises
That we have vowed in our hearts,
That we have promised
In the hiddenness of our souls
To the evil one,
From last Yom Kippur to this Yom Kippur

For all of these, O G-d, we repent
And we offer all of them up to You
O G-d, on the altar of Your holiness.

And we beseech You, based on the grace
And based on the atoning blood
Of Yeshua our Messiah
To make them of no effect,
And shatter them
And pull them down
And destroy them,
And that You would crush
All the wicked schemes of Satan —
In our lives, in the lives of our families,
And in the lives of all the House of Israel.
And let everyone say, "Amen!"

Neilah: Break the Fast

At the end of the Yom Kippur fast, we gather for a break-the-fast celebration which is a congregational carry-in meal, beginning with the Seder of the L-rd, that is, communion. Dairy foods are very popular with this meal. See recipes for suggestions.