

**Yom Kippur, or “Day of Atonement”, takes place on 30 September 2017.**



Many Jewish people will spend the day fasting and praying; its theme centres on atonement and repentance.

Many Jewish people in UK believe that God seals their fate for the coming year on Yom Kippur. It is believed that those who repent from their sins will be granted a happy New Year. Many Jewish people spend time in the synagogue during part of this sacred holiday. The fasting lasts for 25 hours and begins on the evening before Yom Kippur. It ends after nightfall on Yom Kippur. Some restrictions can be lifted when a threat of health or life is involved.

Many Jewish people in the UK attend special services in the evening on Yom Kippur. The *shofar* (a musical instrument made from a ram’s horn) is blown at the end of these services. The holiday ends on a joyous note, and many Jewish people take part in a festive meal after the fast is over.

Other activities include avoiding perfume, not washing and not wearing leather shoes. Some Jewish people in the UK may take the day off work or organise time off during this time of the year, as the general restrictions on work, as described for the Sabbath, apply on Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is often considered the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur’s origins lie in a ritual purification of the Temple in Jerusalem from any accidental ritual impurities that had occurred in the past year. The *Kohen Gadol* (high priest) entered the Holy of Holies at the center of the temple on Yom Kippur. It was important that he was spiritually and physically as pure as possible.



Many rituals were carried out to ensure that the *Kohen Gadol* was pure and that he did not carry any ritual impurities into the Holy of Holies. Yom Kippur became a more somber holiday after the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. It is customary to wear white on Yom Kippur, which symbolises purity and calls to mind the promise that one’s sins should be wiped away. Some people of Jewish faith also believe that humans are compared to angels on this day.

Many Jewish men wear a *kittel* or *sargenes* and a *tallit* on Yom Kippur. A *kittel* is a simple white robe that is also used as a shroud and is worn by bridegrooms in some Jewish communities. A *tallit* (*tallis*, *taleysm*) is a prayer shawl with *tzitzis* strings tied through each of the four corners.

(Information taken from [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com))