

YOM KIPPUR

Sep 20-21, 2026

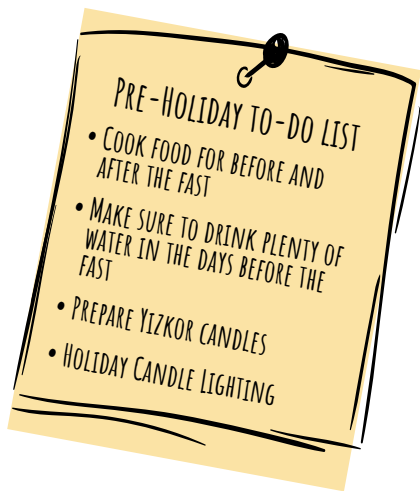
Yom Kippur begins at 7:00pm on Sunday, Sep 20.
Yom Kippur concludes at 7:59pm on Monday, Sep 21.

All times displayed in this guide are for the Greater Toronto Area.



WHAT IS YOM KIPPUR?

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year, when the essence of the soul shines and we are closest to G-d – a day of atonement and becoming one with our Creator and our true selves.



YOM KIPPUR IN JEWISH HISTORY

1313 BCE: The receiving of the Second Tablets after the first ones were destroyed as a result of the Sin of the Golden Calf

410 BCE: Ezekiel's vision of the Third Temple following the destruction of the First and Second Temple.

1973: Start of the Yom Kippur War

Eve of Yom Kippur Rituals

For Wednesday, Oct 1



MIKVAH

Immerse in a Mikvah to purify before the holy day



ATONEMENT

Kaparat ritual (early morning)



LEKACH

Give and receive honey cake



FEAST

Eat two festive meals – one in early afternoon, one just before the fast



BLESSINGS

Bless the children with the Priestly Blessings before the holiday begins



YIZKOR

Light Yizkor candles before Yom Kippur begins

FIVE KEY YOM KIPPUR OBSERVANCES

On Yom Kippur, according to direct Torah law, we are commanded to avoid the following five activities:

1. Eating or drinking (in case of need, see here and consult a medical professional and a rabbi)
2. Wearing leather shoes
3. Applying lotions or creams
4. Washing or bathing
5. Engaging in conjugal relations



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

For assistance in making your Yom Kippur plans, including attending services, arranging Yizkor services for your loved ones, or any other assistance, visit jrcc.org/HighHolidays or contact the JRCC.

📞 Learn more at jrcc.org/YomKippur



THE PRAYER VAULT

No prayer is ignored and no tear goes unnoticed. But the response is not always in the form we expect it to be. At the high point of Yom Kippur, toward the end of the day in the Neilah prayer, we address G-d with the following plea: “You who hears the sound of weeping, store our tears in Your flask, and save us from all cruel decrees.” This seems to be a strange expression. Why would G-d store our tears? It doesn’t seem to be of any use to keep our tears in a flask.

Not always are our prayers answered in the way we want them to be. Sometimes, in His wisdom, G-d does not grant us our wishes at the time we demand them. Instead, He stores away our tears and files away our prayers, to be taken out and answered at another time. In physics, the law of conservation of energy states that energy can never be destroyed, it just changes from one form to another. There is a similar law in metaphysics. No prayer is ever lost; no tear is ever wasted. Your request will be granted; it just may be in an unexpected form. So keep praying, because every word is stored away. It will rebound back to you when you need it most.

① Learn more at jrcc.org/Prayer

MYTH:

YOM KIPPUR IS A SAD DAY

Perhaps because it shares some basic components with Tisha B’Av, our national day of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and the exile of our people, many view Yom Kippur as a sad day. The fact is that Yom Kippur is one of the two happiest days on the calendar. It is the day when G-d forgives us for our sins, a day when we are cleansed from the baggage we picked up during the course of the year. On a deeper level: This forgiveness is achieved because this day is when we rise above the mundane nature of our lives. We rise to a spiritual state of being, connect to our inner souls, and by extension, we are one with G-d himself. What could be more celebratory than that?

A WHALE OF A STORY

On Yom Kippur afternoon, we read the story of Jonah (he of the “got-swallowed-by-a-giant-fish” fame.). What is the connection between the Book of Jonah and Yom Kippur? When he experienced his adventure, Jonah was trying to escape from G-d, so to speak. G-d wanted him to deliver a prophesy to the residents of Nineveh that their city would be destroyed if they did not repent. He was hesitant to do so, because he knew that they would repent while the people of Israel would not, creating “bad karma” for the Israelites.

The story of Jonah teaches us that we can’t run away from ourselves. Just as Jonah’s endeavor to escape G-d’s providence was unsuccessful, so too, we are incapable of eluding our divine purpose in this world and the divine justice for transgressions we may have committed.

On a more uplifting note: G-d spared the people of Nineveh although He had already decreed that they would be destroyed because of their evil ways. This teaches us that no matter our past behavior, G-d’s benevolence and mercy awaits us if we only repent full-heartedly.



THE MOSHIACH CONNECTION

What will Yom Kippur look like when Moshiach comes? The Yalkut Shimoni states, “All the holidays will be nullified in the future except for Purim. Rebbe Eliezer says that even Yom Kippur will never be nullified, as the verse states ‘it is an everlasting statute.’” We will fast on this day just as we do now, even though the world will be permeated with goodness. The purpose of this fast will be to atone for sins prior. Nevertheless, the other Yom Kippur observances, such as not wearing leather shoes, not bathing and the prohibition against marital relations, will be rescinded.

If the days of inauguration of the Third Temple falls during Yom Kippur, then on that Yom Kippur we will not fast, just as was done during the inauguration of the First Temple in the times of King Solomon.

① Learn more at jrcc.org/Moshiach



YIZKOR

When: Monday, Sep 21

Yizkor is the remembrance prayer for departed loved ones, where we implore G-d to remember the souls of our relatives and friends that have passed on. The main component of Yizkor is our private pledge to give charity following the holiday in honor of the deceased. By giving charity, we are performing a positive physical deed in this world, something that the departed can no longer do, especially if our good deeds emulate theirs. Yizkor renews and strengthens the connection between us and our loved ones, brings merit to the departed souls, and elevates them in their celestial homes.

① Online Yizkor form: jrcc.org/yizkor