# MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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*A Study for Judaism · Christianity · Islam*

**DOCUMENT 239**

# Afflict Your Souls

**A Covenant Deep Dive into *Yom HaKippurim (Day of Atonements)* יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים, the Day of Atonement**

***What Is the Day of Atonement, How Is It to Be Kept, and What Does It Mean for the People of Yahweh Today? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response***

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***The Message is Sent to the World***

## REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

| ✡ JUDAISM | † CHRISTIANITY | ☪ ISLAM |
|---|---|---|
| Judaism keeps ***Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)*** on the tenth of the seventh month as its holiest day: a fast from evening to evening, confession, and prayer. Rabbinic law defines the affliction as five deprivations (Mishnah Yoma 8:1) and teaches that the Day does not cover a wrong against a neighbor until the neighbor is appeased (Mishnah Yoma 8:9) — a principle the Written Tanakh already sets down in **Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]**. | Most churches do not keep the Day, reading **Leviticus 16** as fulfilled in the Messiah (Hebrews 9–10). Yet the New Testament itself calls the season ***"the Fast"*** (Acts 27:9), a witness that the Day was still kept, and known by its affliction, in the first century. The Written Tanakh calls it ***"a statute forever"*** for the native and the stranger alike (**Leviticus 16:29**). | Islam has no priestly atonement; ***tawbah (repentance)*** is direct to Allah (Q. 2:37; 39:53), and fasting is a commanded discipline (Q. 2:183). The tenth-day fast of Ashura is tied in hadith to a fast the Jews of Madinah kept for Musa (Sahih al-Bukhari 2004). The Tanakh and the Qur'an both know a fast that humbles the self before the Creator. |

## DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh**'s own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh**'s covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

## HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the revised edition of Doc 239 and replaces the September 2026 edition. It applies the sole authority of the written ***Tanakh*** to three questions about the tenth day of the seventh month: what the Day of Atonement is, how it is to be kept, and what it means for the people of **Yahweh** today. **Yahweh** (**יהוה**) and **Elohim** (**אֱלֹהִים**) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations appear in ***bold italic*** with the English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Scripture references are bold. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14].** Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic literature, the New Testament, and the Qur'an and hadith are cited as historical and comparative reference — not as binding authority — and appear only in the opening table, the Comparative Texts table, and the

Three-Religion Audit. This document stands with Doc 234 (the Feast of Trumpets), Doc 240 (the New Moon and the calendar), Doc 248 (Tabernacles), Doc 336 (Passover and Unleavened Bread), and Doc 338 (the Feast of Weeks). The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

## TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

| DIVISION | BOOKS CITED | PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY |
|---|---|---|
| **Torah** | Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy | The statute, the order of the Day, the offerings, the Jubilee, and the Torah's own usage of the word "afflict" |
| **Nevi'im (Prophets)** | 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi | What the Day is for and what it is not; the fast **Yahweh** chooses; return where no altar stands |
| **Ketuvim (Writings)** | Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 2 Chronicles | The practice of affliction: fasting, confession, and return |

## COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

| CATEGORY | TEXTS CITED | PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY |
|---|---|---|
| **Rabbinic literature** | Mishnah Yoma 6:6; 8:1; 8:9; Talmud Rosh Hashanah 16b; Talmud Megillah 31a; later customs (Kol Nidre, Kapparot, the Ten Days of Repentance) | The rabbinic list of five afflictions; the cliff of the goat; the neighbor appeased first; the books of judgment; the readings of the Day; later customs, named only to be tested against the written text |
| **Non-canonical** | 1 Enoch 8–10 | Where the name Azazel is later given to a fallen figure — outside the Tanakh |
| **New Testament** | Acts 27:9; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9–10 | How the Day is named and read in Christianity: "the Fast" of the first century, and the reading of it as fulfilled |
| **Qur'an and hadith** | Q. 2:37; 2:183; 24:22; 39:53; Sahih al-Bukhari 2004 | Repentance, fasting, and forgiveness in Islam; the Ashura fast and its stated origin |
| **Modern practice** | Jewish synagogue practice; Sabbath-keeping and Sacred Name assemblies | How the Day is kept today, weighed in Sections IX and XII |

# I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — WHAT IS THE DAY, HOW IS IT KEPT, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TODAY

### I-A. The Questions as They Are Usually Asked

Once a year, on a single day, the written covenant stops the ordinary rhythm of life: no work, no food, a gathered assembly, a priest in linen entering the innermost room of the sanctuary, and a goat sent alive into the wilderness. No other day in the covenant calendar asks so much of the people of **Yahweh**, and none promises so much:

***"From all your sins before Yahweh you shall be clean."*** **(Leviticus 16:30)**

The questions put to this Institution are direct.

**First:** what is the Day of Atonement — what did **Yahweh** command, and what does its name mean?

**Second:** how is it to be kept — and what does it mean to ***"afflict your souls"***? Is it a fast, and from what?

**Third:** where no altar stands and no priest in linen enters a sanctuary, what does the Day mean for the people of **Yahweh** today — for the Jewish household that keeps it, for the Christian who was taught it was finished, and for the Muslim who keeps a tenth-day fast of his own?

### I-B. The Questions in the Tanakh's Own Terms

The Tanakh does not answer from tradition, and neither does this document. The September 2026 edition of this study answered the first two questions; this revised edition brings it to the Doc 250 standard, corrects it where it was wrong (Section XIII), and adds what the first edition did not develop: the place of the Day inside the seventh month (Section VII), and what the Day means for the people of **Yahweh** today (Section X).

Every finding below is graded. A finding is **Corroborated** when two or more independent Tanakh witnesses carry it (**Deuteronomy 19:15**). It is **Single witness** when only one text carries it. It is **Not in the text** when it is taught but the Tanakh does not say it.

# II. THE COMMANDING TEXTS — FIVE WITNESSES TO THE STATUTE

The two-or-three-witness rule asks for at least two or three texts before a matter stands. The Day of Atonement stands on five, across three books of the Torah.

**Witness One — Leviticus 16:29–31: the statute itself.**

***"And this shall be a statute forever for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls and do no work at all, the native and the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day he shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins before Yahweh you shall be clean. It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls — a statute forever."*** **(Leviticus 16:29–31)**

The phrase ***chukkat olam (a statute forever)*** **(חֻקַּת עוֹלָם)** H2708, H5769 — the same words the Torah uses for the Passover **(Exodus 12:14)** and for the Feast of Weeks **(Leviticus 23:21)**.

**Witness Two — Leviticus 23:26–32: the appointed time.**

***"Only, on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonements; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall afflict your souls and bring near an offering made by fire to Yahweh. And you shall do no work at all on this very day, for it is a Day of Atonements, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your Elohim. For any soul who is not afflicted on this very day shall be cut off from his people. And any soul who does any work on this very day, that soul I will destroy from among his people... It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall keep your Sabbath."*** **(Leviticus 23:27–32)**

Here the Day stands among the ***mo'adim (appointed times)*** **(מוֹעֲדִים)** H4150 of **Yahweh (Leviticus 23:2)** — His calendar, not a human institution's — and here it is counted from evening to evening.

**Witness Three — Numbers 29:7–11: the offerings of the Day.**

***"And on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall afflict your souls; you shall do no work... one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old... one male goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement and the continual burnt offering."*** **(Numbers 29:7–11)**

The Day carries its own ***chattat ha-kippurim (sin offering of atonement)*** **(חַטַּאת הַכִּפֻּרִים)**, distinct from the daily and festival offerings.

**Witness Four — Leviticus 25:9–10: the shofar of release.**

***"Then you shall cause the shofar of blowing to pass through, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonements you shall cause the shofar to pass through all***

***your land. And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a Jubilee for you."*** **(Leviticus 25:9–10)**

The Day of Atonement is the day the Jubilee opens (Section VII-C).

**Witness Five — Exodus 30:10: the annual anchor.**

***"And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of atonements once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy to Yahweh."*** **(Exodus 30:10)**

Before **Leviticus 16** is spoken, the yearly atonement is already fixed in the instructions for the altar of incense.

**Finding — what the written covenant commands:** the tenth day of the seventh month, from evening to evening; no work at all; the affliction of the soul; a holy convocation; the offerings of the Day; for the native and the stranger; as a statute forever **(Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:27–32; Numbers 29:7–11; Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 25:9)**. **Corroborated** on every point.

## III. THE WORD STUDY — WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS

The vocabulary of the Day is precise. The table sets out the terms this study relies on.

| HEBREW TERM | STRONG'S | CORE MEANING | KEY TEXT |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***kaphar (to cover / atone)*** **כָּפַר** | H3722 | To place a covering between an offense and its consequence; to atone, to purge | **Leviticus 16:30; 17:11** |
| ***kippurim (atonements)*** **כִּפֻּרִים** | H3725 | Atonements — always plural in the name of the Day | **Leviticus 23:27–28; 25:9** |
| ***kapporet (covering-lid)*** **כַּפֹּרֶת** | H3727 | The covering of the ark, where the blood is sprinkled | **Exodus 25:17; Leviticus 16:2, 14** |
| ***kofer (ransom / covering price)*** **כֹּפֶר** | H3724 | A ransom; also pitch, a physical covering | **Exodus 30:12; Genesis 6:14** |
| ***anah (to afflict / humble / bow down)*** **עָנָה** | H6031 | To bring low — by force, by **Yahweh**'s testing, or by one's own act | **Leviticus 16:29; Deuteronomy 8:2–3** |
| ***ta'anit (self-affliction / fasting)*** **תַּעֲנִית** | H8589 | The noun of the same root; the later Hebrew word for a fast day | **Ezra 9:5** |

| HEBREW TERM | STRONG'S | CORE MEANING | KEY TEXT |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***nefesh (soul / life / self / appetite)*** **נֶפֶשׁ** | H5315 | The whole living person; the throat and the appetite | **Genesis 2:7; Proverbs 27:7** |
| ***tzom (fast)*** **צוֹם** | H6685 | A fast from food | **Psalms 35:13; Isaiah 58:3** |
| ***shabbat shabbaton (Sabbath of complete rest)*** **שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן** | H7676 / H7677 | The strictest rest of the calendar | **Leviticus 16:31; 23:32** |
| ***kol melakhah (any work at all)*** **כָּל־מְלָאכָה** | H4399 | All work, not only laborious work | **Leviticus 23:28, 30–31** |
| ***karat (to cut off)*** **כָּרַת** | H3772 | The sanction for refusing the affliction | **Leviticus 23:29** |
| ***hitvaddah (to confess)*** **הִתְוַדָּה** | H3034 | To acknowledge aloud | **Leviticus 16:21; 26:40** |
| ***avon / pesha / chattat (iniquity / rebellion / sin)*** **עָוֹן / פֶּשַׁע / חַטָּאת** | H5771 / H6588 / H2403 | Guilt, rebellion, and missing the mark — the whole range of wrong | **Leviticus 16:16, 21** |
| ***taher (to be clean)*** **טָהֵר** | H2891 | Cleansed, fit to stand before **Yahweh** | **Leviticus 16:19, 30** |
| ***Azazel (Azazel)*** **עֲזָאזֵל** | H5799 | Destination of the living goat; meaning disputed | **Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26** |
| ***deror (liberty / release)*** **דְּרוֹר** | H1865 | The release proclaimed by the Jubilee shofar | **Leviticus 25:10; Jeremiah 34:8** |

### III-A. The Name and the Root: Kaphar

The written text names the Day ***Yom HaKippurim (Day of Atonements)*** (**יוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים**) — in the plural (**Leviticus 23:27–28; 25:9**). The familiar singular ***Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)*** is later Hebrew. The plural speaks of the whole range of what must be covered: the sanctuary, the altar, the priests, and the people (**Leviticus 16:33**).

The root is ***kaphar (to cover / atone)*** (**כָּפַר**) H3722. The lexicons (BDB, HALOT, TWOT) record a real debate over whether the root began as "to cover" (compare Arabic ***kafara (to cover)***) or "to wipe away" (compare Akkadian ***kuppuru (to wipe, purge)***). Tanakh's own usage shows the range. Noah is told to cover the ark ***bakkofer (with pitch)*** (**Genesis 6:14**). Jacob hopes to ***"cover the face"*** of Esau

with a gift — to appease him (**Genesis 32:20 [Hebrew 32:21]**). The land ***"cannot be atoned for"*** except by the blood of the one who shed blood (**Numbers 35:33**). A coal touches the prophet's lips and his sin is ***"atoned"*** (**Isaiah 6:7**).

What these share is the placing of something between an offense and its consequence. And the Torah is explicit about who provides it:

***"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls."*** (**Leviticus 17:11**)

The means of covering is **Yahweh**'s gift, not humanity's invention. The whole Day stands on this ground (see Doc 161 on the ***kofer nefesh (ransom for a soul)***, Doc 192 on the blood of the covenant, and Doc 230 on the ***nefesh*** in the blood).

**Finding — the meaning of the name:** the Day is a day of ***kippurim (atonements)***, the covering **Yahweh** provides, and the means is His gift (**Leviticus 16:30; 17:11; 23:27–28**). **Corroborated.** Whether the root's first sense was "cover" or "wipe away" is a lexical debate the Tanakh's usage does not settle, and nothing in this study depends on it.

### III-B. The Root Anah: The Torah Defines Its Own Verb

The command is ***"you shall afflict your souls" — te'annu et nafshoteichem (you shall afflict your souls)*** (**תְּעַנּוּ אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם**) (**Leviticus 16:29**) and ***ve'innitem et nafshoteichem (and you shall afflict your souls)*** (**וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם**) (**Leviticus 16:31; 23:27, 32; Numbers 29:7**). The verb is ***anah (to afflict / humble / bow down)*** (**עָנָה**) H6031. It is a different root from ***anah (to answer)*** H6030. Its family includes ***oni (affliction)*** (**עֳנִי**) H6040, ***ani (afflicted / poor)*** (**עָנִי**) H6041, and ***anav (humble)*** (**עָנָו**) H6035 — the word used of Moses in **Numbers 12:3**. The word is best understood by watching the Torah use it.

**Affliction imposed by force.** When Sarai deals harshly with Hagar, the verb is ***vate'anneha (and she afflicted her)*** (**Genesis 16:6**), and the angel answers:

***"Yahweh has heard your affliction."*** (**Genesis 16:11**)

When Egypt oppresses Israel, the verb is the same: ***"the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied"*** (**Exodus 1:12**), and **Yahweh** says ***"I have surely seen the affliction of My people"*** (**Exodus 3:7**; see also **Deuteronomy 26:6–7**). In this usage affliction is what the powerful do to the powerless, and **Yahweh** hears it and acts.

**Affliction by Yahweh, for a purpose.** This is the decisive usage:

***"And you shall remember all the way that Yahweh your Elohim led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to afflict you, to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He afflicted you, and let you hunger, and fed you with manna... to make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that comes out of the mouth of Yahweh does man live."*** (**Deuteronomy 8:2–3**)

The Torah defines its own verb by narrative: to be afflicted is to be brought to hunger and dependence so that the heart is humbled, tested, and taught. Verse 16 gives the end: ***"to afflict you and to test you, to do you good in your latter end."*** The affliction has a purpose, and the purpose is good.

**Affliction taken up by one's own act.** The same verb, in its reflexive form, describes the person who humbles himself before **Elohim**. Ezra proclaimed a fast ***"that we might humble ourselves (lehit'annot) before our Elohim"*** (**Ezra 8:21**). And when Daniel set aside pleasant bread, meat, wine, and anointing for three weeks (**Daniel 10:2–3**), the messenger described what he had done with this very verb:

***"From the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself (ulehit'annot) before your Elohim, your words were heard."*** (**Daniel 10:12**)

Place these beside the Day of Atonement and the design comes into view. On the tenth of the seventh month the people of **Yahweh** re-enter, by their own act, the dependence of the wilderness: no work (no self-provision), no bread (no self-sustenance), and the heart turned to the One who provides. The rest and the fast are one lesson.

**Finding — what "afflict" means in the Torah's own usage:** to be brought low, by force, by **Yahweh**'s testing, or by one's own humbling before **Elohim** (**Genesis 16:6; Exodus 1:12; Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 16; Ezra 8:21; Daniel 10:12**). **Corroborated.**

### III-C. Nefesh: Who Is Being Afflicted?

The object of the verb is ***nefesh (soul / life / self / appetite)*** (נֶפֶשׁ) H5315. The man became a ***nefesh chayyah (living soul)*** (**Genesis 2:7**) — the whole living person. Its Hebrew sense includes the throat and the appetite:

***"A sated soul tramples honey, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."*** (**Proverbs 27:7**)

***"For He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good."*** (**Psalms 107:9**)

So ***"afflict your souls"*** commands more than the discipline of the stomach. It commands the whole self — appetite, comfort, pride, and self-reliance — to be brought low before **Yahweh**. But the appetite is where the command touches the ground, because the ***nefesh*** is where a human being feels need.

## IV. WHAT "AFFLICT YOUR SOULS" MEANS — THREE READINGS TESTED

Notice the weight the Torah places on this one command. Of everything required on the Day, the affliction is the one to which **Yahweh** attaches the sanction of being cut off:

***"For any soul who is not afflicted on this very day shall be cut off from his people."*** (**Leviticus 23:29**)

Three answers have been given to the question of what the affliction is. Each is tested here.

### IV-A. Reading One: Affliction Includes Fasting

**First,** the psalmist: ***"I afflicted my soul with fasting" — inneiti vatzom nafshi (I afflicted my soul with fasting)*** (**עִנֵּיתִי בַצּוֹם נַפְשִׁי**) (**Psalms 35:13**). Fasting is the instrument; the soul is what is afflicted.

**Second, Isaiah 58:3**: ***"Why have we fasted, and You do not see? Why have we afflicted our soul, and You take no notice?"*** Fasting and afflicting the soul stand as a parallel pair, and verse 5 calls the fast ***"a day for a man to afflict his soul."***

**Third, Ezra 8:21** and **Daniel 10:3, 12**, where abstaining from food is described with the reflexive of ***anah***.

**Fourth,** the noun of the same root, ***ta'anit (self-affliction)*** (**תַּעֲנִית**) H8589, appears once in the Tanakh, of Ezra rising ***"from my affliction"*** at the evening offering, after sitting appalled all day over the people's unfaithfulness (**Ezra 9:3–5**); afterward he ***"ate no bread and drank no water"*** (**10:6**). The language that would later name every fast day in Hebrew grew from this verb.

**Fifth,** the wilderness hunger by which **Yahweh** Himself defined the verb (**Deuteronomy 8:3**).

**Finding:** the affliction of the Day includes fasting from food. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 35:13; Isaiah 58:3, 5; Ezra 8:21; 9:5; Daniel 10:3, 12; Deuteronomy 8:3**).

### IV-B. Reading Two: Affliction Is a Humbled Heart

***"The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elohim, You will not despise."*** (**Psalms 51:17** [Hebrew 51:19])

***"I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him who is crushed and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly."*** (**Isaiah 57:15**)

Two further witnesses use a neighboring root, ***kana (to be humbled / brought low)*** (כָּנַע) H3665: if Israel's ***"uncircumcised heart is humbled"*** in exile, **Yahweh** will remember His covenant (**Leviticus 26:41**); and of Ahab, who tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and fasted, **Yahweh** said, ***"Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before Me?"*** (**1 Kings 21:27, 29**). The root differs; the meaning is the same.

**Finding:** the affliction is not only of the body; it is a humbled, contrite heart, and the outward fast serves it. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; 58:5; Leviticus 26:41; 1 Kings 21:29**).

### IV-C. Reading Three: Affliction Is a Fixed List of Deprivations

Later rabbinic law defines the affliction as five deprivations — eating and drinking, washing, anointing, sandals, and marital relations (see the Comparative Texts table and Section XII). The written text gives no list. But the Tanakh's own practice of humbling shows a precedent for each item: food and drink (**Psalms 35:13; Esther 4:16; Ezra 10:6**); washing and anointing (**2 Samuel 12:20; 14:2; Daniel 10:3**); going barefoot (**2 Samuel 15:30; Isaiah 20:2**); and the setting aside of marital joy in a time of fast and assembly (**Joel 2:16**; compare **Exodus 19:15**).

**Finding:** each of the five deprivations is a practice of humbling witnessed in the Tanakh. That they are the command's definition is **Not in the text**. A keeper who observes them stands on solid Tanakh precedent; the written covenant commands the affliction and leaves its boundary to the humbled heart, governed by the life-principle (Section VI-E).

### IV-D. Water and the Boundary of the Fast

The written text of the Day says ***"afflict,"*** not ***"abstain from water."*** The Tanakh shows fasts without water — Esther's ***"neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day"*** (**Esther 4:16**) and Ezra's ***"he ate no bread and drank no water"*** (**Ezra 10:6**) — but both are exceptional, and neither is tied to this Day. The keeper holds two things together: the seriousness of the command (**Leviticus 23:29**), and the life-principle that governs every statute (**Leviticus 18:5**).

**Finding:** that the fast of the Day must exclude water is **Not in the text**. That a complete fast is a recognized form of affliction is **Corroborated** (**Esther 4:16; Ezra 10:6**).

### IV-E. What Affliction Is Not — Isaiah 58 as Yahweh's Own Commentary

The prophets' commentary on the fast is severe. In **Isaiah 58** the people fast, and **Yahweh** refuses it:

***"Behold, on the day of your fast you find your pleasure, and all your laborers you drive hard... Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to afflict his soul? To bow down his head like a bulrush and spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to Yahweh?"*** **(Isaiah 58:3, 5)**

The affliction was performed and refused, because it was cut off from justice. Then comes the definition:

***"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and to bring the afflicted poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"*** **(Isaiah 58:6–7)**

Read the Hebrew closely. The ***"afflicted poor"*** of verse 7 are ***aniyyim (afflicted ones)*** **(עֲנִיִּים)** H6041 — the root of the command to afflict the soul. And verse 10 joins the two with the very words of the Day's command:

***"And if you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall rise in the darkness."*** **(Isaiah 58:10)**

The ***"afflicted soul"*** is ***nefesh na'anah (an afflicted soul)*** **(וְנֶפֶשׁ נַעֲנָה)** — the ***nefesh*** and the verb ***anah*** of **Leviticus 23**. The prophet's design is unmistakable: <u>the one who has afflicted his own soul for a day is placed where the afflicted soul lives every day, and is then obligated to satisfy it.</u> The fast is meant to end in the release of the afflicted. That is why the Day and the Jubilee share a shofar **(Leviticus 25:9–10)**.

Two further prophets confirm the principle. **Amos 5:21–24**: ***"I hate, I despise your feasts... but let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."*** And **Zechariah 7:5–10**: ***"When you fasted and mourned... was it for Me, for Me, that you fasted?"*** — followed by ***"Execute true judgment, and show steadfast love and mercy each to his brother; do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the stranger, or the poor."*** The fasts of **Zechariah 7** are the memorial fasts of the exile, not the Day of Atonement (Section XIII), but the principle **Yahweh** states there governs every fast kept in His name.

**Finding:** affliction without justice is refused; the fast **Yahweh** chooses ends in the release and feeding of the afflicted. **Corroborated (Isaiah 58:3–10; Amos 5:21–24; Zechariah 7:5–10)**.

# V. THE ORDER OF THE DAY — LEVITICUS 16

### V-A. Why the Chapter Begins Where It Does

***"And Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before Yahweh and died."*** (**Leviticus 16:1**)

The Day is born inside a warning about access (the deaths are recorded in **Leviticus 10:1–2**):

***"Tell Aaron your brother that he must not come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the covering that is upon the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud upon the covering."*** (**Leviticus 16:2**)

The innermost room is not a place a human being may enter by his own initiative. The Day of Atonement is the one prescribed way in.

### V-B. The Preparation (16:3–10)

The high priest does not wear the golden garments on this day. He bathes and puts on holy linen (**16:4**) — the plain dress of a servant, not the splendor of an office. He brings a young bull as a sin offering for himself and his household, and a ram for a burnt offering (**16:3, 6**). From the congregation he receives two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering (**16:5**). He casts ***goralot (lots)*** (**גּוֹרָלוֹת**) H1486 over the goats: ***"one lot for Yahweh and one lot for Azazel"*** (**16:8**). The goat for **Yahweh** is offered as the sin offering; the goat for Azazel is ***"set alive before Yahweh, to make atonement over it, to send it away to Azazel into the wilderness"*** (**16:10**).

The order is deliberate: the priest is atoned for first (**16:6, 11**), and only then the people. The text does not exempt the one whose office is to atone for others.

### V-C. The Innermost Room (16:11–19)

The priest takes a censer of coals from the altar and two handfuls of fine incense, and enters within the veil, ***"that the cloud of the incense may cover the covering that is upon the testimony, lest he die"*** (**16:12–13**). He sprinkles the blood of the bull on the front of the covering and seven times before it (**16:14**), then the blood of the goat for the people (**16:15**). Then comes the sentence that reveals what the Day is for:

***"Thus he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel and because of their rebellions, all their sins; and so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses."*** (**Leviticus 16:16**)

Sin, in the Torah, is not only private guilt; it defiles the place where **Yahweh** dwells: ***"lest they die in their uncleanness, when they defile My dwelling that is in their midst"*** (**Leviticus 15:31**). The Day of Atonement is the yearly cleansing that lets a holy **Yahweh** keep dwelling among an unclean people. The words ***"which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses"*** are among the most tender in the Torah: **Yahweh** remains with them in the midst of their impurity, and provides the means to keep doing so.

### V-D. The Living Goat and the Confession (16:20–22)

***"And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the living goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their rebellions, all their sins; and he shall put them on the head of the goat, and send it away by the hand of a man appointed into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon itself all their iniquities to a land cut off; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness."*** (**Leviticus 16:21–22**)

Three words for wrong are gathered on purpose and leave nothing out: ***avon (iniquity / guilt)*** (**עָוֹן**) H5771, ***pesha (rebellion)*** (**פֶּשַׁע**) H6588, and ***chattat (sin / missing the mark)*** (**חַטָּאת**) H2403. The confession is ***hitvaddah (to confess)*** (**הִתְוַדָּה**) H3034 — a spoken act; the wrongs are named aloud. The goat ***nasa (bears / carries away)*** (**נָשָׂא**) H5375 them to ***eretz gezerah (a land cut off)*** (**אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה**) H1509 — a place from which they do not return. Compare **Micah 7:19**: ***"You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."***

### V-E. Azazel — What the Text Says and Where Scholars Divide

The most debated word of the chapter is ***Azazel (Azazel)*** (**עֲזָאזֵל**) H5799, which occurs only in **Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26**. Three readings are held. **First,** a description of the goat — ***ez ozel (the goat that goes away)*** — the reading behind the Greek ***"the one sent away,"*** the Latin ***"caper emissarius,"*** and Tyndale's English ***"scapegoat."*** **Second,** a place — a rugged, cut-off region (the later rabbinic account describes a cliff; the written text says only ***"a land cut off"***). **Third,** the name of a wilderness power, the reading of some modern scholars, with the name later given to a fallen figure in 1 Enoch, a book outside the Tanakh.

The dispute need not be settled for the rite to be understood, because the text itself settles what the goat is not. **First,** the goat for Azazel is never slaughtered, never offered, and never brought to the altar; it is sent away alive (**16:10, 20–22**), while the goat that atones is the goat for **Yahweh** (**16:9, 15**). **Second,** the very next chapter forbids sacrifice to wilderness powers: ***"And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat-demons, after whom they go whoring"*** (**Leviticus 17:7**). **Third,** the covenant's consistent claim is that no rival power acts outside **Yahweh**'s authority (**Isaiah 45:7**; Doc 148).

**Finding:** whatever ***Azazel*** denotes, the rite is not worship of it; the atoning act belongs to **Yahweh** alone, and the second goat is the visible sending-away of what has been atoned (**Leviticus 16:9–10, 15, 21–22; 17:7**). **Corroborated.** Which of the three readings of the name is right is a question the Tanakh does not settle.

### V-F. The Close of the Service and Its Aim (16:23–34)

The priest removes the linen, bathes, puts on his regular garments, and offers the burnt offerings for himself and for the people (**16:23–24**). The carcasses of the bull and goat are burned outside the camp; the one who led the goat away and the one who burned the carcasses wash and bathe before returning (**16:26–28**). Then the statute is given for the whole people (**16:29–34**), with its aim: ***"to cleanse you; from all your sins before Yahweh you shall be clean"*** (**16:30**). The goal is not only pardon but cleanness — ***taher (to be clean)*** (**טָהֵר**) H2891, fitness to stand before **Yahweh**. And the last line seals the rhythm:

***"And this shall be a statute forever for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."*** (**Leviticus 16:34**)

The Day comes back every year, because human beings come back every year.

**A note on Ezekiel.** The Day of Atonement is not named in the festival calendar of Ezekiel's temple vision. Instead, Ezekiel prescribes a cleansing of the sanctuary with a sin offering on the first of the first month, ***"and so you shall do on the seventh of the month, for everyone who errs and for the simple; so you shall make atonement for the house"*** (**Ezekiel 45:18–20**). The purpose is the purpose of **Leviticus 16** — to atone for the house. Nothing in Ezekiel withdraws the Day; **Leviticus 16:34** and **23:31** call it a statute forever. **Finding:** that Ezekiel abolishes or replaces the Day is **Not in the text**; that the cleansing of **Yahweh**'s house is a purpose the prophets carry forward is **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 16:16, 33; Ezekiel 45:18–20**).

## VI. THE DAY AS COVENANT LAW — REST, ASSEMBLY, THE STRANGER, THE SANCTION, AND LIFE

### VI-A. Shabbat Shabbaton: The Sabbath of Complete Rest

Twice the Day is called ***shabbat shabbaton (a Sabbath of complete rest)*** (**שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן**) H7676, H7677 (**Leviticus 16:31; 23:32**). The doubled form is used of the weekly Sabbath (**Exodus 31:15; Leviticus 23:3**), of the Sabbath year (**Leviticus 25:4**), and of this Day. On the festival days the Torah forbids only ***melekhet avodah (laborious work)*** (**מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה**) (**Leviticus 23:7–8, 21, 25, 35–36**); on the Day of Atonement, as on the weekly Sabbath, it forbids ***kol melakhah (any work at***

***all)*** (**כָּל־מְלָאכָה**) H4399 (**Leviticus 23:28, 30–31**; compare **Exodus 20:10**; Doc 331). **Yahweh**'s own sanction for working is that He Himself will destroy that soul (**Leviticus 23:30**).

Put this beside the affliction and the design repeats. The manna taught Israel to gather double on the sixth day and to rest on the seventh, trusting **Yahweh** to sustain them (**Exodus 16:22–30**). On the Day of Atonement the people rest from work and from bread. Both are one act of surrender: I am not the source of my own life.

### VI-B. The Called Assembly

The Day is a ***mikra kodesh (holy convocation)*** (**מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ**) H4744, H6944 (**Leviticus 23:27; Numbers 29:7**). It is not a solitary retreat. The Tanakh shows the pattern of such an assembly: the people gather, the Torah is read, confession is made, and worship follows (**Nehemiah 9:1–3**). **Joel** calls the whole household:

***"Sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and those who nurse at the breast."*** (**Joel 2:15–16**)

### VI-C. The Stranger

The statute is for ***ha-ezrach ve-ha-ger (the native and the stranger)*** (**הָאֶזְרָח וְהַגֵּר**) H249, H1616 (**Leviticus 16:29**). The Day is not an ethnic possession. The stranger who lives within the covenant community shares the rest, shares the affliction, and shares the covering (**Numbers 15:15–16**; Doc 329). This is the Torah's own anticipation of the prophet:

***"And the foreigners who join themselves to Yahweh... everyone who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and holds fast My covenant — these I will bring to My holy mountain... for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."*** (**Isaiah 56:6–7**)

That is why this document speaks to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike: the Day of Yahweh's covering has a door for every nation that will come through it.

### VI-D. The Sanction and Its Boundary: What "Cut Off" Means

The penalty for refusing the affliction is ***karat (to cut off)*** (**כָּרַת**) H3772 (**Leviticus 23:29**). The Tanakh does not define it in a single formula; it has been read as early death, the ending of a line, or exclusion from the people, and its execution belongs to **Yahweh**, not to a human court (**23:30**: ***"I will destroy"***). What the text does establish is the difference between weakness and defiance. **Numbers 15:27–31** separates sin ***bishgagah (in error)*** (**בִּשְׁגָגָה**) H7684, for which an offering is given, from sin ***beyad ramah (with a high hand)*** (**בְּיָד רָמָה**), where the person ***"reviles Yahweh"*** and is cut off.

Yet the Day reaches further than one might expect. The confession of **Leviticus 16:21** includes the ***pesha'im (rebellions)*** — not errors only — and **Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]** provides a way back from deliberate fraud, robbery, and false oath: restitution in full, a fifth added, and a guilt offering. David's deliberate sin met no sacrifice, only confession and **Yahweh**'s answer: ***"I have sinned against Yahweh." And Nathan said to David, "Yahweh also has put away your sin; you shall not die"*** (**2 Samuel 12:13**). The line the covenant draws is between the one who returns and the one who will not (see Doc 238).

### VI-E. The Life-Principle and the Limits of the Fast

The written text commands the affliction and does not name exceptions. But the same covenant sets a principle over all its statutes:

***"And you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does them, he shall live by them: I am Yahweh."*** (**Leviticus 18:5**)

The commands are given for life, not for the loss of it (see also **Ezekiel 20:11**). When many ate the Passover unprepared, Hezekiah prayed, ***"May Yahweh the good pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek Elohim... though not according to the cleansing of the sanctuary,"*** and ***"Yahweh heard Hezekiah and healed the people"*** (**2 Chronicles 30:18–20**). And the Torah requires that the injured be ***"thoroughly healed"*** (**Exodus 21:19**).

The text does not address by name children, the sick, the elderly, or those who are pregnant or nursing. This document does not treat their situation as a reason for the Day to be set aside, and it holds that nothing in the written covenant authorizes anyone to endanger life to keep the affliction. A keeper who is ill, on medication, pregnant or nursing, elderly, or caring for small children keeps the Day in the measure health allows, seeks a physician's counsel beforehand, and offers what can be safely offered: the rest, the assembly, the confession, a humbled heart, and the justice of **Isaiah 58**. This is covenant wisdom, not medical advice.

**Finding:** the statutes are given for life, and the Tanakh shows **Yahweh** receiving the sincere heart that could not meet a command's full measure. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 18:5; Ezekiel 20:11; 2 Chronicles 30:18–20**). Named exemptions for particular persons are **Not in the text**.

# VII. THE DAY INSIDE THE SEVENTH MONTH — THE ORDER OF RETURN

## VII-A. Three Appointed Times, One Movement

The seventh month holds three of **Yahweh**'s appointed times, and the Torah sets them in order (**Leviticus 23:23–43**):

| DAY | APPOINTED TIME | WHAT THE TEXT ATTACHES TO IT | LIBRARY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1st** | Day of Blowing | A memorial of blowing; a rest; a holy convocation (**Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 29:1**) | Doc 234 |
| **10th** | Day of Atonements | Affliction; complete rest; atonement and cleansing (**Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:27–32**) | Doc 239 |
| **15th–22nd** | Feast of Booths and the Eighth Day | Dwelling in booths; ***"you shall rejoice before Yahweh"*** (**Leviticus 23:34–43; Deuteronomy 16:15**) | Doc 248 |

The order is itself a teaching. The sound of the first day calls to attention, as the shofar calls in **Joel 2:1, 12–13** — ***"turn to Me with all your heart."*** The tenth day covers and cleanses. Then, five days later, the people are commanded to rejoice. As Doc 248 found, the joy of Booths is not the joy of the careless; it is the joy of the forgiven. **Return and cleansing come first; then joy.**

**Finding:** the Day of Atonement stands between the day of blowing and the Feast of Booths in **Yahweh**'s own order (**Leviticus 23:24, 27, 34; Numbers 29:1, 7, 12**). **Corroborated.** That the ten days between them are a fixed season of judgment sealed on the tenth is **Not in the text** (Section XI).

## VII-B. Two Days of Blood: Passover and Atonement

The covenant year has two great days of blood. At the Passover the blood is put on the doorposts of each house, and **Yahweh** says, ***"when I see the blood, I will pass over you"*** (**Exodus 12:13**; Doc 336). On the Day of Atonement the blood is carried within the veil to the covering of the ark (**Leviticus 16:14–15**). The first protects the household; the second cleanses the dwelling of **Yahweh** in the midst of the people. Both rest on the same word: the blood is **Yahweh**'s gift ***"to make atonement for your souls"*** (**Leviticus 17:11**). This is an observation from the text, offered as a teaching aid, not a doctrine built on its own.

### VII-C. The Shofar of Release — Atonement and the Jubilee

The Jubilee opens on the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 25:9–10**). The Torah joins them because they are one movement. On the Day of Atonement **Yahweh** covers the debt of human sin. At the Jubilee human beings release one another: land returns, servants go free, the poor are restored (compare Doc 194). Forgiveness received is meant to become forgiveness given.

The prophets press the point. In **Jeremiah 34:8–17** the leaders of Judah proclaim ***deror (liberty)*** (**דְּרוֹר**) H1865 to their Hebrew servants and then take them back. **Yahweh**'s answer mirrors their act:

***"You have not obeyed Me by proclaiming liberty, each to his brother and each to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty — to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine."*** (**Jeremiah 34:17**)

And **Isaiah 61:1–2** takes the Jubilee's liberty as the sign of **Yahweh**'s favor to the afflicted. A Day of Atonement without release is the fast **Yahweh** does not choose (**Isaiah 58:6**).

**Finding:** the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee share one shofar and one purpose: release. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 25:9–10; Isaiah 58:6; 61:1–2; Jeremiah 34:8–17**).

## VIII. WHERE NO ALTAR STANDS — FIVE COVENANT WITNESSES TO RETURN

How is the Day kept where there is no sanctuary? The Tanakh answers with its own witnesses to how a covenant people returns to **Yahweh**. Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, five are given.

**Witness One — Leviticus 26:40–45: the Torah's own pattern of return.**

***"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers... if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they accept the punishment of their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob... I will not reject them, nor abhor them, to destroy them utterly and to break My covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their Elohim."*** (**Leviticus 26:40–44**)

Here, in the Torah and outside the sanctuary, is the pattern of the Day: confession, a humbled heart, and Yahweh's remembrance of His covenant. The verb ***hitvaddu (they confess)*** is the verb of the high priest's confession over the goat (**16:21**).

**Witness Two — Deuteronomy 30:1–14: the word is near.**

***"And you shall return to Yahweh your Elohim and obey His voice... with all your heart and with all your soul... and Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of***

***your offspring, to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."*** (**Deuteronomy 30:2, 6**)

The verb ***shuv (to return / turn back)*** (**שׁוּב**) H7725 carries the whole covenant of repentance, and the text adds that return is not remote: ***"the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it"*** (**30:14**; Doc 333).

**Witness Three — Psalms 32 and 51: the confession of a man who had no offering to bring.**

***"I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not cover; I said, I will confess my rebellions to Yahweh — and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."*** (**Psalms 32:5**)

***"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... For You do not desire sacrifice, or I would give it... The sacrifices of Elohim are a broken spirit."*** (**Psalms 51:2, 16–17** [Hebrew 51:4, 18–19])

The psalmist does not abolish the altar — **Psalms 51:18–19 [Hebrew 51:20–21]** looks forward to its offerings — he shows what stands beside it. The man who ***"covers"*** his sin is not covered; the man who uncovers it in confession is (compare **Proverbs 28:13**).

**Witness Four — Exodus 34:6–7, Micah 7:18–19, and Jonah 4:2: the character that makes return possible.**

***"Yahweh, Yahweh, El compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in steadfast love and truth, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and rebellion and sin."*** (**Exodus 34:6–7**)

The three words of **Leviticus 16:21** — iniquity, rebellion, sin — are the three words **Yahweh** names in His own self-description. The prophets rest their hope on it: ***"Who is an El like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over rebellion... You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"*** (**Micah 7:18–19**). When Nineveh fasted and turned, ***"Elohim saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and Elohim relented"*** (**Jonah 3:10**), and Jonah himself cites the words of **Exodus 34** as the reason (**Jonah 4:2**). Affliction and turning do not earn **Yahweh**'s mercy; they meet a mercy already declared.

**Witness Five — Nehemiah 9 and Daniel 9: confession in the absence of the Temple.**

**Nehemiah 9** records a national confession in fasting and sackcloth that traces the whole history of covenant faithfulness and failure: ***"You are righteous in all that has come upon us, for You have dealt truly, and we have acted wickedly"*** (**9:33**). **Daniel 9** is a confession made in exile, without a temple, an altar, or a priest: Daniel set his face ***"to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting***

***and sackcloth and ashes"*** (**9:3**), and confessed for his people. At the time of the evening offering — though none was being offered — the answer came (**9:20–21**). The heavens did not wait for an altar.

### VIII-A. What the Tanakh Gives a People Without an Altar

**First, Hosea 14:1–2 [Hebrew 14:2–3]**: ***"Take words with you and return to Yahweh; say to Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, and we will pay bulls — our lips."*** The Hebrew ***uneshallemah farim sefateinu (and we will pay bulls, our lips)*** (**וּנְשַׁלְּמָה פָרִים שְׂפָתֵינוּ**) offers the lips in the place of the bulls.

**Second, 1 Kings 8:46–50**: Solomon's prayer at the dedication foresees a people carried captive who ***"turn back with all their heart and with all their soul... and pray to You toward their land,"*** and asks that **Yahweh** ***"hear in heaven... and forgive Your people who have sinned against You."***

**Third, Psalms 141:2**: ***"Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering."***

**Fourth, Ezekiel 11:16**: to the exiles **Yahweh** says, ***"Although I have removed them far off among the nations... yet I will be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they have gone."*** The phrase ***mikdash me'at (a little sanctuary)*** (**מִקְדָּשׁ מְעַט**) H4720, H4592 means that in exile, **Yahweh** Himself is the sanctuary.

**Finding — how the Day is kept where no altar stands:** the Tanakh never says the Day lapses when the altar is absent; it calls the Day a statute forever and shows the covenant people in exile keeping faith with what they could bring — rest, affliction, assembly, confession, words, and a returned heart. **Corroborated** (**Leviticus 26:40–45; Deuteronomy 30:1–14; 1 Kings 8:46–50; Hosea 14:1–2; Daniel 9:3–21; Ezekiel 11:16**).

This document does not say the priestly acts have been replaced, and it does not reproduce them. No goat is chosen by lot, no blood is sprinkled, no incense is offered before a covering. And it does not claim for any elder, teacher, or institution the office of Aaron on this day (see Doc 288 on the everlasting priesthood and **Jeremiah 33:18**). The elder gathers the people, reads the Torah, teaches, and prays with them; the atoning provision is **Yahweh**'s (**Leviticus 17:11**), and the return is the people's.

## IX. HOW TO KEEP THE DAY TO YAHWEH

The table separates three things that are often blended: what the written Tanakh **commands**, what the Tanakh **witnesses** as the covenant people's practice, and what is **later tradition**. Only the first is

command. The second is strong precedent. The third is not binding under the standing rule of this Institution.

### IX-A. The Keeping of the Day, Item by Item

| PRACTICE | WHAT THE WRITTEN TANAKH SAYS | STATUS |
|---|---|---|
| **Know the day** | The tenth day of the seventh month (**Leviticus 23:27; Numbers 29:7**), from the evening that closes the ninth day to the following evening (**Leviticus 23:32**). The month opens with the day of blowing (**Leviticus 23:24**; Doc 234), so the Day falls nine days after it by whatever calendar the community keeps (Doc 240). | **Commanded** |
| **Cease all work** | **Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:28, 30–31.** A Sabbath of complete rest — any work, not only laborious work. | **Commanded** |
| **Afflict your souls** | **Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27, 32; Numbers 29:7.** The Tanakh's own usage: fasting (**Psalms 35:13; Isaiah 58:3, 5; Ezra 8:21**), the dependence of the wilderness (**Deuteronomy 8:2–3**), and a humbled heart (**Psalms 51:17; Daniel 10:12**). | **Commanded** |
| **Set aside ornament and comfort** | Not listed for the Day, but the covenant community's humbling included sackcloth (**Jonah 3:5–8; Daniel 9:3; Nehemiah 9:1**), putting off ornaments (**Exodus 33:4–6**), and abstaining from anointing, sandals, and marital joy (**2 Samuel 12:20; 15:30; Daniel 10:3; Joel 2:16**). | **Witnessed** |
| **Gather** | A holy convocation (**Leviticus 23:27**). Pattern: **Nehemiah 9:1–3; Joel 2:15–16**. | **Commanded** |
| **Read the Torah aloud** | **Deuteronomy 31:10–13; Nehemiah 8:1–8; 9:3.** The Day's own texts are **Leviticus 16**, **Leviticus 23:26–32**, and **Numbers 29:7–11**; **Isaiah 57:14–58:14** is its prophetic commentary. | **Witnessed** |
| **Set right what you owe** | Restitution in full with a fifth added (**Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]**); no hatred in the heart, no vengeance, no grudge (**Leviticus 19:17–18**; Docs 273, 293); ***"By steadfast love and truth iniquity is atoned"*** (**Proverbs 16:6**). | **Commanded** (covenant law) |
| **Confess aloud** | **Leviticus 16:21; 26:40; Numbers 5:6–7; Psalms 32:5; Proverbs 28:13**; the confessions of **Nehemiah 9** and **Daniel 9**. | **Commanded** pattern |

| PRACTICE | WHAT THE WRITTEN TANAKH SAYS | STATUS |
|---|---|---|
| **Pay your vows** | A vow is kept, not cancelled (**Numbers 30:2 [Hebrew 30:3]; Deuteronomy 23:21–23 [Hebrew 23:22–24]; Ecclesiastes 5:4–6 [Hebrew 5:3–5]**; Doc 252). The remedy for a rash word is confession (**Leviticus 5:4–5**). | **Commanded** |
| **Offer words in place of bulls** | **Hosea 14:1–2; Psalms 51; 141:2; 1 Kings 8:46–50.** | **Witnessed** |
| **Loosen bonds, feed the hungry, release the oppressed** | **Isaiah 58:6–10; Leviticus 25:9–10; Zechariah 7:9–10; Deuteronomy 15:1–2.** The fast **Yahweh** chooses. | **Commanded** (prophetic definition) |
| **Guard life** | **Leviticus 18:5; 2 Chronicles 30:18–20; Exodus 21:19.** | **Commanded** principle |
| **Close in trust and prepare to rejoice** | The Feast of Booths follows five days later, with the command to rejoice (**Leviticus 23:34, 40; Deuteronomy 16:15**; Doc 248). | **Commanded** (the next appointed time) |

### IX-B. A Framework for the Day (an Arrangement, Not a Command)

What follows is a suggested order for a household or a gathered assembly. Only the items marked **Commanded** above are commands; the arrangement is practical wisdom.

**Before the Day (the ninth).** Ask the questions **Leviticus 6:1–7** and **Leviticus 19:17–18** force: Whom have I wronged? What do I owe? Whom do I hold a grudge against? Make the restitution you can; speak the reconciliation you can; release what you are holding. Keep the vows you made (Doc 252). Prepare the household so that no work needs be done on the Day (compare **Exodus 16:22–23**). Those whose health is in question speak with a physician beforehand (Section VI-E).

**At sundown.** The Day begins (**Leviticus 23:32**). Gather. Read **Leviticus 16** and **Leviticus 23:26–32** aloud. Open in confession, naming the wrongs as **Leviticus 16:21** names them: the iniquities, the rebellions, the sins.

**Through the night and the day.** Rest. Pray. Read the witnesses of Section VIII together — **Psalms 32, 51, and 130**, **Daniel 9**, **Nehemiah 9**, **Hosea 14**, and **Jonah** — and take **Isaiah 57:14–58:14** to heart. Keep the children in the assembly (**Joel 2:16**). Where the fast is complete, let it teach what **Deuteronomy 8:3** says it teaches: that man does not live by bread alone.

**Toward evening.** Turn to the justice the fast exists for. Decide what you will release, whom you will feed, whom you will pay, and whom you will forgive (**Isaiah 58:6–10**). The fast is not finished until it has done something for the afflicted.

**At nightfall.** The Day closes ***"from evening to evening"*** (**Leviticus 23:32**). Close in thanksgiving, not despair. Break the fast gently, and share your bread with the hungry (**Isaiah 58:7**). The booths are five days away.

### IX-C. The Day on the Calendar

The Day falls on the tenth of the seventh month, and the month is set by the New Moon (Doc 240). In 2026 the calculated Jewish calendar kept the Day from the evening of September 20 to the evening of September 21; communities that set the month by the sighted moon kept it one day later. In 2027 the calculated calendar places the Day from the evening of Sunday, October 10, to the evening of Monday, October 11. Miqdash Bethel does not sanctify a calendar of its own or claim the office of those who set the month (Doc 240); it keeps fellowship with the covenant community's calendar and notes where a one-day difference may arise. The command is the tenth day; a household that keeps it in good faith by its community's reckoning keeps the Day.

## X. WHAT THE DAY MEANS FOR THE PEOPLE OF YAHWEH TODAY

The question of meaning is answered by the text's own purposes. Six follow from the witnesses already set out.

### X-A. Yahweh Still Wills to Dwell Among an Unclean People

The Day exists because **Yahweh** chose to dwell ***"in the midst of their uncleannesses"*** (**Leviticus 16:16**) and gave the means to keep doing so. The same will is spoken to the exiles: ***"I will be to them a little sanctuary"*** (**Ezekiel 11:16**). For the people of **Yahweh** today, the Day means He has not withdrawn. The covering is still His to give, and He has said what He is: ***"compassionate and gracious, slow to anger"*** (**Exodus 34:6**).

### X-B. Sin Is Real, and It Is Named Aloud

The Day does not let sin stay vague. Three words name it (**Leviticus 16:21**), it is confessed aloud, and it is carried ***"to a land cut off."*** A generation that calls nothing sin cannot keep this Day, and a believer who will not name his own wrongs cannot either. ***"He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy"*** (**Proverbs 28:13**).

### X-C. Forgiveness Received Becomes Forgiveness Given

The Day opens the Jubilee (**Leviticus 25:9–10**), and the fast **Yahweh** chooses releases the afflicted (**Isaiah 58:6–10**). For the people of **Yahweh** today, the Day is the yearly reckoning of what they hold against others: debts, grudges, unpaid wages, and the brother left unreconciled (**Leviticus 19:17–18**; Doc 293). A believer who asks to be covered while holding his brother bound has not kept the Day.

### X-D. No Human Being Takes the Place of Aaron

Only the high priest entered, only once a year, only with blood not his own, and only after atoning for himself (**Leviticus 16:2, 6, 34**). For the people of **Yahweh** today, this means no pastor, rabbi, imam, elder, or prophet can claim to carry another person's atonement, sell it, or withhold it. The return is to **Yahweh** directly (**Deuteronomy 30:2; Hosea 14:1–2**), and the covering is His (**Leviticus 17:11**).

### X-E. The Door Is Open to the Nations

The statute is for ***"the native and the stranger"*** (**Leviticus 16:29**), and **Isaiah 56:6–7** promises the foreigner a place in the house of prayer. The Christian who was taught that the Day was ended, and the Muslim who keeps a tenth-day fast without knowing its root, are both invited back to the written text: one day, kept from evening to evening, in rest, affliction, assembly, confession, and justice.

### X-F. A Yearly Return, Not a One-Time Event

***"Once a year"*** (**Leviticus 16:34; Exodus 30:10**). The Day comes back because human beings come back. For the people of **Yahweh** today, it is the appointed time to stop, take account, set right, and turn — not out of fear that **Yahweh** is unwilling, but because He has appointed a day for it.

**Finding — what the Day means today: Yahweh** still dwells among His people and provides the covering; sin is named and confessed; forgiveness received is given; no human mediator takes Aaron's place; the stranger is included; and the return is yearly. **Corroborated** on every point by the witnesses of Sections II–VIII.

## XI. WHAT THE WRITTEN TEXT DOES NOT SAY — GUARDING THE STATUTE FROM ADDITION

***"You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take away from it."*** (**Deuteronomy 4:2**)

The Day of Atonement has gathered much later observance, some of it beautiful and some of it questionable. This section does not condemn it; it says plainly which of it stands on the written text.

| ITEM | WHAT THE WRITTEN TANAKH SAYS | STATUS |
|---|---|---|
| **The "Ten Days of Repentance"** and the teaching that the year's verdict is written on the first of the seventh month and sealed on the tenth | The Tanakh gives two days, the first (**Leviticus 23:24**) and the tenth (**Leviticus 23:27**), and names no ten-day season. It does know a book before **Yahweh** (**Exodus 32:32–33; Psalms 69:28 [Hebrew 69:29]; Malachi 3:16; Daniel 12:1**; Doc 238). The writing-and-sealing schedule is not written. | **Book: Tanakh. Schedule: later tradition.** |
| **Kol Nidre**, the formula for the annulment of vows | The Tanakh's standard is that a vow is kept (**Numbers 30:2 [Hebrew 30:3]; Deuteronomy 23:21–23 [Hebrew 23:22–24]; Ecclesiastes 5:4–6 [Hebrew 5:3–5]; Proverbs 20:25**). The written remedy for a rash word is confession (**Leviticus 5:4–5**), not a liturgy of cancellation (Docs 236, 252). | **Later tradition** |
| **Kapparot**, the swinging of a fowl over the head before the Day | No such rite appears in the Tanakh. The atoning blood is **Yahweh**'s gift on the altar (**Leviticus 17:11**); a private rite of substitution performed elsewhere does not stand on that text (compare **Deuteronomy 12:13–14**). | **Later tradition** |
| **White garments** for the worshippers | Only the high priest is commanded linen on this day (**Leviticus 16:4, 23, 32**). Worshippers in white is a custom. | **Later tradition** |
| **"Yom Kippur"** (singular) | The Tanakh names the Day in the plural, ***Yom HaKippurim (Day of Atonements)*** (**Leviticus 23:27–28; 25:9**). | **Vocabulary** |
| **"The Day was fulfilled and ended"** | The Tanakh calls it ***"a statute forever"*** (**Leviticus 16:29, 31, 34; 23:31**) and nowhere announces its end. **Jeremiah 33:18** promises that the priests shall not lack a man before **Yahweh**. | **Not in the text** |

## XII. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION HANDLES THE DAY

| ELEMENT | ✡ JUDAISM | † CHRISTIANITY | ☪ ISLAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Practice today** | Yom Kippur kept from evening to evening as the holiest day: a complete fast, five afflictions (Mishnah Yoma 8:1), five services, confession, the reading of Leviticus 16, Isaiah 57:14–58:14, and Jonah (Talmud Megillah 31a), closing with the shofar | Largely not kept. Hebrews 9–10 reads Leviticus 16 as fulfilled in the Messiah (compare Romans 3:25). Some Sabbath-keeping and Sacred Name assemblies keep the Day with a fast | No Day of Atonement. The Ashura fast on the tenth of Muharram is recommended, its origin tied to Musa's rescue (Sahih al-Bukhari 2004); fasting is commanded in Ramadan (Q. 2:183); repentance is direct (Q. 2:37; 39:53) |
| **What it keeps faithfully** | The date, the rest, the fast, the assembly, the confession, and the principle that a wrong against a neighbor must be put right first (Mishnah Yoma 8:9) — what Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26] already teaches | A serious view of sin and of **Yahweh**'s provision for atonement; the first-century witness that the Day was known as "the Fast" (Acts 27:9) | Fasting as a discipline of the soul; direct return; forgiveness given as the condition of forgiveness sought (Q. 24:22), which agrees with Isaiah 58 and Leviticus 19:17–18 |
| **Where it departs from the text** | Treats the five afflictions as the definition of the command; the Ten Days schedule, Kol Nidre, and Kapparot are later additions (Section XI) | Ends a statute the Tanakh calls forever, on the strength of a later reading; loses the affliction and the justice of Isaiah 58 in practice | Sets aside the altar and priesthood of Leviticus 16 and 17:11, which the written covenant says **Yahweh** gave; Ashura is a different institution from a one-day Sabbath of affliction with its own rest and assembly |
| **Covenant witness** | Where no altar stands, the people kept faith with words, fasting, and a returned heart (Hosea 14:1–2; Daniel 9) — as Judaism has done for nearly two thousand years | Read Leviticus 16:30 and 23:31 as written and ask what text ends them; recover Isaiah 58 as the Day's prophetic meaning | The Qur'anic instincts — fasting, direct return, forgiveness given — are met in the written Day, under the mercy **Yahweh** declared of Himself (Exodus 34:6–7) |

## XIII. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

Under the standing rule of October 2, 2026, the Library's own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else's. This revision found the following.

**Correction 1 — the September 2026 edition of this document.** This revised edition corrects the first edition in these places. **(a) Hosea 14:2 [Hebrew 14:3]** was transliterated ***"ufarim sefateinu"***; the Hebrew reads ***uneshallemah farim sefateinu (and we will pay bulls, our lips)*** (**וּנְשַׁלְּמָה פָרִים שְׂפָתֵינוּ**), and the rendering ***"instead of bulls"*** is now given literally (Section VIII-A). **(b) Numbers 30:13** was cited without its Hebrew verse number; it is **Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14]**. **(c)** Declaration VI cited ***"Leviticus 5:20–26,"*** the Hebrew numbering, as though it were the English; it now reads **Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]**. **(d)** The Scripture Index listed ***"Psalm 51:4, 18–19"*** while the body cited the English verses 51:2 and 51:17; the index now follows the English with the Hebrew in brackets. **(e) Leviticus 26:41** and **1 Kings 21:29** were offered as witnesses to the root ***anah***; they use ***kana (to be humbled)*** H3665, and are now identified as such (Section IV-B). **(f) Zechariah 7:5** and **8:19** were used as though they spoke of the Day of Atonement; they speak of the memorial fasts of the exile, and are now applied only as a principle (Section IV-E). **(g)** Rabbinic sources (Mishnah Yoma 6:6; 8:1; 8:9; Talmud Megillah 31a; Rosh Hashanah 16b) appeared in the body and in the practice tables; under the September 28, 2026 rule they now appear only in the opening table, the Comparative Texts table, and the Three-Religion Audit. **(h)** Hebrew personal and book names (Aharon, Mosheh, Yisra'el, Hizkiyahu, Shelomoh, Vayikra, Tehillim and others) are now in English; the website and closing lines follow the Doc 250 standard. **(i)** Added: **Daniel 10:12**, **Ezra 9:5** (***ta'anit***), **Isaiah 58:10** (***nefesh na'anah***), **Ezekiel 45:18–20**, the place of the Day in the seventh month (Section VII), the calendar (Section IX-C), and what the Day means today (Section X). **Made** in this edition, which replaces the September 2026 edition.

**Correction 2 — 613 Laws listing, No. 134.** The entry reads ***"Not to eat or drink on Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:29)."*** **Leviticus 23:29** commands that the soul be afflicted and does not name eating or drinking; that the affliction includes fasting is **Corroborated** (**Psalms 35:13; Isaiah 58:3, 5**), but the words ***"eat or drink"*** are the rabbinic definition. A bracketed note now says so. **Made** in the 613 Laws Google Doc.

**For Kepha's decision.** The 613 Laws listing Nos. 133–136, 505, and 541 name the Day ***"Yom Kippur,"*** the later singular. The listing follows the traditional rabbinic catalog, so the name was left as it stands (the same decision left open for Nos. 130, 131, and 540 in Doc 234); if the listing should carry the Torah's own name, they would read ***"Yom HaKippurim [the Day of Atonement]."***

## XIV. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, no doctrine may stand on a single text. Each declaration below draws on more than one witness.

| # | COVENANT DECLARATION | BASIS |
|---|---|---|
| **I** | The Day of Atonements is **Yahweh**'s appointed time — the tenth day of the seventh month, from evening to evening, a statute forever for the native and the stranger alike. | **Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:27–32; Numbers 29:7** |
| **II** | The Day atones and cleanses. The covering is **Yahweh**'s gift, not humanity's invention, and its goal is that His people be clean before Him and that He keeps dwelling among them. | **Leviticus 16:16, 30; 17:11** |
| **III** | To afflict the soul is to be brought low before **Yahweh**: fasting, humbling, and the dependence of the wilderness, with a broken and contrite heart. | **Deuteronomy 8:2–3; Psalms 35:13; 51:17; Isaiah 58:3, 5; Daniel 10:12** |
| **IV** | The Day is a Sabbath of complete rest. Rest from work and rest from bread are one act of trust: I am not the source of my own life. | **Leviticus 16:31; 23:28–32; Deuteronomy 8:3** |
| **V** | Affliction without justice is refused. The fast **Yahweh** chooses looses the bonds of wickedness, feeds the hungry, and satisfies the afflicted soul. | **Isaiah 58:6–10; Amos 5:21–24; Jeremiah 34:17** |
| **VI** | Confession, restitution, and reconciliation belong to the Day. What is owed to a neighbor is not covered by fasting; it must be set right. | **Leviticus 16:21; 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]; 19:17–18; Proverbs 28:13** |
| **VII** | Where no altar stands, the covenant shows what **Yahweh**'s people may bring: a humbled heart, confession, words in place of bulls, and a life returned to Him. No human being takes the place of Aaron. | **Hosea 14:1–2 [Hebrew 14:2–3]; Psalms 51:16–17 [Hebrew 51:18–19]; 1 Kings 8:46–50; Leviticus 26:40–45; Ezekiel 11:16** |

## XV. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE DAY ASKS OF THOSE WHO KEEP IT

**Behind the questions about the Day there is usually a person who wants to know what Yahweh asks of him now.** Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

**First: know what the Day is.** It is **Yahweh**'s appointed time for the covering and cleansing of His people, the tenth of the seventh month, kept from evening to evening as a statute forever (**Leviticus 16:29–34; 23:27–32**).

**Second: stop, and be brought low.** Do no work at all, and afflict your soul — by fasting as your health allows, and by a humbled heart before **Yahweh** (**Leviticus 23:28–29; Psalms 35:13; 51:17**).

**Third: name your sins and set right your wrongs.** Confess aloud the iniquities, the rebellions, the sins (**Leviticus 16:21**); restore what you took, with a fifth added (**Leviticus 6:1–7 [Hebrew 5:20–26]**); release your grudge (**Leviticus 19:17–18**).

**Fourth: gather, hear, and return.** Assemble, read the Torah, and bring the offering of your lips (**Joel 2:15–16; Hosea 14:1–2**). No one stands in Aaron's place for you; return to **Yahweh** directly, and He is near (**Deuteronomy 30:2, 14**).

**Fifth: let your fast do something for the afflicted.** Share your bread, loose the bond, satisfy the afflicted soul (**Isaiah 58:6–10**) — and then go up to the booths and rejoice, as one who has been forgiven (**Leviticus 23:40**).

The Day of Atonement is not a day to earn mercy. It is a day to stand still, hungry and unoccupied, and receive what Yahweh has already declared.

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| **Genesis 16:6, 11** | Sarai afflicts Hagar; **Yahweh** hears | III-B |
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***"For on this day he shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins before Yahweh you shall be clean."***

**Leviticus 16:30 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh**

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**MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION**

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