

Lev. 16:29 And this shall be to you a law for all time: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial [אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם]; and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. 30 For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord. 31 It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial [וְעָנִיתֶם]; it is a law for all time.

KJV: ye shall afflict your souls [also OJPS]

NRSV: you shall deny yourselves

Everett Fox: you are to afflict your selves

<http://thetorah.com/yom-ha-kippurim-the-biblical-significance/> [Baruch Schwartz]

In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, **you shall fast**^[4] and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you.

[4] The Hebrew phrase אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם (Leviticus 16:31), usually translated “afflict your souls” or the like, actually means “shall deprive your throats,” i.e. abstain from food and drink; see my commentary on Leviticus 16 in *The Jewish Study Bible*, second edition (Oxford University Press, 2014), 234.

29: *Practice self-denial*, lit. “deprive your throats,” i.e., fast (see Isa. 58:3, 5). The translation reflects the halakhic midrash, according to which “nefesh” is used in the sense of “self”; based on this the Rabbis decreed additional forms of self-affliction besides the abstinence from food and drink indicated explicitly by the text, including abstaining from washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes, and engaging in sexual intercourse.

Baruch Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary)

In biblical literature the idiom *‘innah nefesh* always connotes fasting, as Ibn Ezra observed and as we may deduce from the contexts of Isaiah 58:3,10 and Psalms 35:13.

Is. 58:3 “Why, when we fasted [צַדִּיקֵינוּ], did You not see?”

When we starved our bodies [עָנִינוּ נַפְשֵׁינוּ], did You pay no heed?”

IBN EZRA: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial. Isa. 55:2 tells us, “Give heed to Me, and you shall eat choice food and enjoy the richest viands.” Since self-denial is the opposite of enjoyment, we understand that one meaning of self-denial is fasting. We see this also in Isa. 58:10, “And you offer your compassion to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted creature” (stating the same thing twice in parallel phrases, as was the way of the prophets). Ps. 35:13 says, “I denied myself by fasting”; but, since fasting is mentioned explicitly there, we cannot use that verse to prove what is meant by “denial” *without* mention of fasting. In any case, we have a tradition that tells us the nature of the self-denial to be performed on the Day of Atonement, so there is really no need to search the Scriptures. As a general rule, however, any mention of self-denial in the terms used here—literally, “affliction of the soul”—is a reference to fasting.

Psa. 69:2 Deliver me, O God, for the waters have reached my neck. כִּי בָאוּ מַיִם עַד־נַפְשִׁי

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