**Class # 4 – Why do we fast on Yom Kippur?**

Senior Fellowship Leadership Program

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Woody Allen’s “Radio Days” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlJHdVHRBbk>

1. What are the people’s feeling concerning fasting on Yom Kippur?
2. Why did the next door Jewish neighbors playing of the radio bother them?
3. Why did the man so quickly be convinced to leave his observance?

Vayikra 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; [תְּעַנּ֣וּ אֶת־נַפְשֹֽׁתֵיכֶ֗ם, lit. “Afflict your souls”] and you shall do no manner of work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial; it is a law for all time.

4) Why is Teshuva and forgiveness aided by fasting? Isn’t being refreshed more helpful?

Three approaches:

1. Ralbag on the Torah – The “Humility” theory
2. “Before G-d , You will be purified” - the “Angel” theory
3. The Chizuk theory

Isaiah 58 - the last section of the Haftorah of Yom Kippur

Cry with full throat, without restraint; Raise your voice like a ram’s horn! Declare to My people their transgression, To the House of Jacob their sin. To be sure, they seek Me daily, Eager to learn My ways. Like a nation that does what is right, That has not abandoned the laws of its God, They ask Me for the right way, They are eager for the nearness of God: “Why, when we fasted, did You not see? When we starved our bodies, did You pay no heed?”

Because on your fast day You see to your business And oppress all your laborers! Because you fast in strife and contention, And you strike with a wicked fist! Your fasting today is not such As to make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast I desire, A day for men to starve their bodies?

Is it bowing the head like a bulrush And lying in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call that a fast, A day when the LORD is favorable?

No, this is the fast I desire: To unlock fetters of wickedness, And untie the cords of the yoke To let the oppressed go free; To break off every yoke. It is to share your bread with the hungry, And to take the wretched poor into your home; When you see the naked, to clothe him, And not to ignore your own kin. Then shall your light burst through like the dawn And your healing spring up quickly; Your Vindicator shall march before you, The Presence of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then, when you call, the LORD will answer; When you cry, He will say: Here I am. If you banish the yoke from your midst, The menacing hand, and evil speech, And you offer your compassion to the hungry And satisfy the famished creature— Then shall your light shine in darkness, And your gloom shall be like noonday. The LORD will guide you always; He will slake your thirst in parched places And give strength to your bones. You shall be like a watered garden, Like a spring whose waters do not fail. Men from your midst shall rebuild ancient ruins, You shall restore foundations laid long ago. And you shall be called “Repairer of fallen walls, Restorer of lanes for habitation.” If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, From pursuing your affairs on My holy day; If you call the sabbath “delight,” The LORD’s holy day “honored”; And if you honor it and go not your ways Nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains—

Then you can seek the favor of the LORD. I will set you astride the heights of the earth, And let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob— For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

1. Hashem tells Isaiah to rebuke the Jews. The Jews are upset that they call out to Hashem and HE doesn’t answer and they fast and He doesn’t pay any attention. What flaw do they have?