# Class # 2 – Yom Kippur: Seize The Day!

# Senior Fellowship Leadership Program

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal - prepared collaboratively with Rabbi Yoni Sacks

**Why do many people dread Yom Kippur?**

Woody Allen’s “Radio Days” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlJHdVHRBbk](%20%20https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlJHdVHRBbk)

 1. What are the people’s feelings 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?

**The Haftorah of Yom Kippur Morning - Yeshayah [Isaiah] 58**

**Step 1: Constructive criticism:**

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 interest (Chefets) 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?

Questions:

1. What problem is the Navi identifying in the Jews’ style of observance?
2. In what way does this style of observance abandon Hashem?
3. What specifically is wrong with their approach to fasting?
4. Why is seeking of personal interest (chefets) contradictory to teshuva on a fast day?
5. Are the people “really” interested in nearness to Hashem? What proof is there for the Navi’s answer?

**Step 2: First step of teshuva:**

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.

**Questions:**

6. What kind of teshuva on the fast day does Hashem want?

7. What areas of cheyt does the Navi focus upon?

**Step 3: A teshuva-based society:**

Then shall your light burst through like the dawn and your healing will 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 quench 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.”

**Questions:**

7.   In what way is Tzedaka U’mishpat similar to “social justice” ? In what key way is Tzedaka U’mishpat different from “social justice”? How exactly does Tzedaka Umishpat follow from recognizing the “Kingship of Heaven” ?

**8.** What are the priorities of service to Hashem, according to the Navi? Does this mean that careful halachic observance is not important?

**Case Studies:**

1. “Yaakov” in response to the haftorah decided to dedicate time to addressing the new needs arising from Coronavirus. There are many people who are isolated and need help. On Yom Kippur he committed to studying the possible candidates that he could help and by Sukkot begin a weekly response, visiting delivering food etc,
2. “Miriam” decided to study 5 key areas in monetary law that she is currently unaware of and unwittingly neglecting other peoples rights. Working with the MJE educators, she identified appropriate texts to begin her journey to justice.
3. “Sarah” decided to identify 3 close relatives, first and foremost her parents, that she has not been relating to with tzedaka and chessed. She decided to study the laws of Kibbud av viem with MJE educators and identify the needs of her loved ones between YK and Sukkos and devise a plan to be implemented immediately after the Sukkot Holiday.
4. “Jerry” decided to further develop Yeshaya’s concept of Hashem’s tzedakah and chessed in Creation, through Tefilla. He decided to study the tefillot, seeking to identify the various aspects of tzedaka and chessed of the Creator discussed in Shacharit, mincha maarive and mussaf of Shabbat and Holidays.