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**YOM KIPPUR**

# The Five Inuyim of Yom Kippur

## INUYIM

On Yom Kippur there are five particular items that are restricted, known as *inuyim* or afflictions. The Torah dictates:<sup>1</sup>

אך בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא  
מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יְהִיָּה לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם...

*But you must celebrate the tenth of this seventh month as a Day of Atonement, a holy occasion. You must **afflict yourselves**...*

On Yom Kippur in addition to a prohibition on work (*issur melakha*) we are instructed to “**afflict ourselves**”. How is this to be defined? Hazal extrapolate that there are five major activities that are prohibited: eating, drinking, wearing leather shoes, washing and having relations. Let us explore the purpose of these prohibitions. We will offer three perspectives.

1. Vayikra 23:27

לעילוי נשמות

שיינדיל סימה בת מאיר ז"ל

**Sonia Rottenberg ז"ל**

On her 8<sup>th</sup> yahrzeit 17 Tishrei

*Mark & Livia Rottenberg  
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## REBOOT TO PURIFY OURSELVES

There is a tragic Gemara in Mesehet Taanit (21), which we will review with a positive spin on it. The story is told about Nahum Ish Gamzu. He was the Rebbi of Rabbi Akiva.

Nahum ish gamzu was a Tzadik. He became blind in both eyes, his two arms were amputated, he was totally mutilated and was full of boils. His *talmidim* inquired as to why he suffered so much. He explained that he brought this tragic state upon himself. He once hesitated when helping a poor man. He told him to wait until he got off his donkey to give him some food. The poor individual died before Nahum could provide him with food. Nahum was so distraught that he did not provide assistance sooner to this individual in need. Nahum requested that the eyes that didn't have proper mercy should be blinded. The legs that did not act quick enough should be amputated. He articulates various limbs and body parts that did not act with proper sympathy.

Perhaps we can derive an important lesson from this Gemara. Not in terms of punishment but in terms of purpose. Every part of our body, every limb, every talent that we were gifted by Hakadosh Baruch Hu we should use properly. On Yom Kippur we need to cleanse each one of our senses, to purge them and then to channel them for *avodat Hashem*.

In the prayer we recite immediately prior to the *Kol Nidre* service, *Tefillat Zakah*, we address specifically that. Through not eating, we should correct all the inappropriate eating

we have engaged in throughout the year. Eating without a brakha, without washing or benching. The legs that took me to inappropriate venues. The eyes that may have viewed inappropriate scenes. We refer to our limbs, the manner in which they impacted our lives and seek to cleanse them, so that they all can be directed to enable us to properly serve our Creator.

To use a modern term, Yom Kippur is about rebooting our lives. Sometimes we get frozen. When our computer freezes, the only way to get it to work is to restart it. Yom Kippur is our restart button. We focus on every area of our life. Eating, drinking, walking, working and we go to the other extreme in order to in a sense turn off and restart.

#### DISCOMFORT LEADS TO TESHUVA

The Gemara in Yoma (79) teaches us that the amount to be consumed in order to violate the prohibition of eating on Yom Kippur is different from the typical quantity required for other purposes. Usually the shiur is a *k'zayit* (size of an olive). With respect to the prohibition of eating on Yom Kippur it is a larger shiur, the size of a date. Why is there a larger quantity that is required in order to violate the prohibition of eating on Yom Kippur? The Torah does not state “do not eat.” It states: “afflict yourselves.” Hazal determined that if one consumes less than a date, they are still in a state of affliction.

On Yom Kippur, we cannot eat or wash. We feel agitated, uncomfortable, out of sorts, we don't feel like ourselves. That is the purpose! To feel our humanness. To recognize we do not have everything we need. Experiencing physical deficiencies leads us to contemplate our spiritual inadequacies as well. When we are relaxed and comfortable it is more

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difficult to focus on introspection. When we are uncomfortable, we recognize our vulnerability, that we are finite and consider our purpose on this earth. The first step towards meaningful repentance is being shaken up. To be out of our comfort zone.<sup>2</sup>

#### ANGELIC – ESCAPING WORLDLY PLEASURES

The third idea is the opposite of the second idea. There are many commentaries that suggest that being uncomfortable on Yom Kippur is not the goal. The Gemara tells us in Yoma (78) that there were some Amoraim that tried to find ways of keeping cool on Yom Kippur in place of a shower. They did not require one to suffer from the heat.

The Gemara states as follows: אמר רב יהודה

2. Rashi tells us in Parashat Eikav, *ein adam morid b'Hakadosh Barukh Hu elah mitoh sviah*. We rebel against Hashem when we feel satiated.

מותר להצטנן בפירות you could take cold fruits and rub it on yourself on Yom Kippur in order to cool off. Nowadays there is a new fad to place a cold ice pack around one's neck. There is nothing wrong with it. The prohibition is to wash. Other forms of cooling off would be permitted. One is not required to suffer.

One of the reasons given for eating on the ninth of Tishre is so that it is easier to fast on the tenth (Yom Kippur).<sup>3</sup> The Rosh<sup>4</sup> is even more expansive and states: הכינו עצמכם – prepare yourselves for fasting. Hashem only requires one day of fasting. The only weekday of the year that it is a mitzvah d'oraita to eat is on erev Yom Kippur. Strengthen yourself to eat and drink, so that you will be able to fast tomorrow and make it a meaningful experience.

The Rambam in Sefer Hamitzvot does not

list the mitzvot in the order they appear as the Sefer HaHinukh does. Rather, he has clusters of mitzvot. The mitzvah preceding the prohibition of eating on Yom Kippur<sup>5</sup> is the prohibition of being a *ben sorer umoreh* (a glutton). The prohibition of focusing too much on food is followed by the mitzva to fast on Yom Kippur.

What is the connection between *ben sorer umoreh* and Yom Kippur? The *ben sorer umoreh* priorities *gashmiyut* (luxuries). He seeks the pleasures of this world and steals to satisfy his desires. Perhaps on Yom Kippur we escape the physical world so we can focus on our spirituality. To be angelic, removed from physical pleasures.

Rav Mirsky, in the third volume of *Hegiyonei Halakha*<sup>6</sup>, notes that the word

3. Rashi Devarim 11: 16

4. Piske HaRosh Yoma 8:22

5. Mitzva 195

6. Rav Mirsky, *Hegiyonei Halakha* volume 3

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*ne'ilah* is usually interpreted as the gates of heaven are closing. Perhaps there is an alternative interpretation. It is not just the gates closing upstairs, but we have to **lock that feeling in our hearts** and take it with us. When we declare ה' הוא האלוקים - Hashem is our master! We change the *nusah* to *hatmeinu* חתמינו – it is to be sealed above and sealed on our hearts. We have to take this spiritually uplifting day with us throughout the rest of the year.

### CONCLUSION

To summarize, what is the purpose of the five afflictions for us?

Number one, they are meant to cleanse, so we could **reboot** every aspect in our lives. Our eating, our drinking, our seeing, our work. Number two, to feel uncomfortable.

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To feel not like ourselves. To feel dependent, to feel lacking. To **recognize our dependence** on Hakadosh Barukh Hu. Number three, to be **angelic**. To recognize that we are in a different world on Yom Kippur.

As Yom Kippur approaches, may we be able to incorporate all three aspects and contemplate before Whom we are standing. To know we have the ability to restart- as a new person, who will not succumb to desires. To be able to focus on our spirituality and to “lock it inside us” and carry it with us so that this year’s Yom Kippur experience is truly meaningful and life-changing. ■

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