

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 2

ערב יום כיפור תשע"ה

Yom Kippur

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Erev Yom Kippur

The Torah commands us to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. This not only gives us the strength to fast, but also provides a way of honoring Yom Kippur with food and drink. Many *tzaddikim* who would usually use only one hand when eating, would use both hands when eating on Erev Yom Kippur.

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One Erev Yom Kippur, a Roman officer dispatched his servant to buy him a fish. At the market he found only one fish on sale and agreed to pay one gold coin for it. However, a Yiddishe tailor who was standing there approached the seller and offered a higher bid. He and the servant tried to outbid each other, until the Yid won the fish for the sum of five gold coins.

When the officer was told what had happened, he was understandably upset – but also curious.

He sent for the Yid and asked him: "Why did you spend five coins on a fish and not let my servant buy it?"

The Yiddishe tailor answered, "How could I not have bought it, even if it had cost ten gold coins? I bought it to eat on a day on which Hashem commanded us to eat and drink, a day when we are certain that He will forgive our sins."

The officer was so impressed that he sent him off in peace.

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On Erev Yom Kippur 1888, a vintage chossid called Reb Zalman of Tcherbin walked right into the study of the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch after *shachris* and greeted him with a jovial "Gut Yom Tov!"

The Rebbe, who was seriously engrossed in a *sefer*, replied, "Yes, it is Yom-Tov, and Yom-Tov is a time to be happy. But it is also Erev Yom Kippur, and one must be in a state of *hisorerus teshuvah* (arousal to *teshuvah*) from the depths of one's heart. And *teshuvah* consists of regret over the past and undertaking positive resolutions for the future."

Reb Zalman responded, "Rebbe, we are soldiers. Hashem told us that the first half of Erev Yom Kippur is a Yom-Tov, so we need to

be joyful. Only after *chatzos* must one daven *minchah*, say *Al cheit*, and do *teshuvah*."

And he concluded by saying, "Rebbe, give me *lekach*." The Rebbe, pleased with his answer, took a piece of honey cake from the plate and said, "I am giving you a piece of *lekach*, and may Hashem give you a sweet year."

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One year, the *mispalelim* of the town Mezhibuzh decided to abolish all the *tzedaka* collecting that customarily took place on Erev Yom Kippur, for it caused too much noise and disorder. When the Baal Shem Tov heard about this, he did not allow this regulation to be enforced. He related how one year on Erev Yom Kippur all the forces of *kelipah* gathered to form a blockage that would not allow the *tefillos* of the Yidden to ascend Above. However, as soon as the Yidden below started rattling their *pushkes*, to ask for *tzedaka*, and a great clatter was created from the coins thrown in by the *mispallelim*, the *kelippos* were torn apart by the noise.

The Kedusha of the Day

Chazal say that if not for Yom Kippur the world would not be able to carry on.

Satan complained to Hashem, "*Ribono Shel Olam!* You have given me power over all the nations of the world, yet over the Yidden I have no power."

Hashem told him, "I will give you power over them on Yom Kippur, but only if you can find them doing *aveiros*."

Yom Kippur finally came, and Satan could not find any *aveiros*, he told Hashem, "You have a nation like *malochim*: they don't eat, they live in peace with each other and are clean from *aveiros*."

Whenever Hashem hears such words, He cleanses the Yidden of any previous *aveiros*.

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If a person wants to be forgiven on Yom Kippur, does he first have to do *teshuvah*? This question is the subject of a *machlokes* in the Gemara. Rabbi holds that even if one does not

do *teshuvah*, the essence of the day of Yom Kippur – the mere fact that the day has passed – grants atonement, but the Chachomim say that Yom Kippur atones only for those who do *teshuvah*. The Halachah follows the view of the Chachomim.

The Rambam writes that the essential *kedusha* of Yom Kippur brings atonement; it is only that to attain that *kedushah* one is required to do *teshuvah*.

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The Baal HaTanya points out that *kaparah* (atonement) actually means 'scrubbing', scrubbing off the dirt of *aveiros*. The day of Yom Kippur not only cancels punishment, but also removes any 'stains' or 'dirt.' For on this day the inner bond between the essence of a Yid and the essence of Hashem is revealed, and hence any superficial 'stains' are automatically nullified.

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One year, at the end of Yom Kippur, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev announced: "It is well known that whenever a person is in doubt as to whether a *brachah* is required, he should refrain from reciting it. It therefore clear that since we recite the *brachah* stating that Hashem forgives our *aveiros*, this is surely so, without any doubt whatever."

Motzoei Yom Kippur

Motzoei Yom Kippur is so much a Yom-Tov that on that evening we wish each other a "Good Yom Tov!" It is therefore a *mitzvah* to eat and rejoice at this time, when a *bas-kol* announces to the Yidden to "go and eat with joy."

Consider This

Is Erev Yom Kippur a serious time for *teshuvah* or a Yom-Tov? And Yom Kippur itself?

Why are we so sure that Hashem has cleansed us?

Sparks of Greatness

Reb Akiva Eiger

Reb Akiva Eiger was born on *Yud Daled Cheshvan*, 1761. After relocating a few times, he was appointed as the Rav and Rosh Yeshivah of Poznan. He was one of the outstanding *Achronim*, and he greatly affected the areas in learning of Gemara and Halacha. He was known to be very modest and exceptionally humble. He passed away on the *Yud Gimmel Tishrei*, 1837.

When Reb Akiva Eiger came to the city of Poznan, where he was to become Rav, he was brought in a chariot, harnessed to strong stallions. With him, sat his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, who had married his daughter two years prior. The entire city came out to greet them and stood cheering at the sides of the road.

The Chasam Sofer, who understood that this entire honor was meant for his father-in-law, on his appointment as Rov, climbed

down the chariot and joined the crowds at the road side. But after a bit of time, he looked up at the other side of the wagon and to his astonishment saw his father-in-law, Reb Akiva Eiger also walking at the side of the now empty wagon, apparently convinced that all this honor was being given to his illustrious son-in-law...

In the year 1831, a deadly plague of cholera hit east and central Europe, and Poznan was among the cities that were very strongly affected by the plague. Many areas in the city were cordoned off, and deemed dangerous to enter. But Reb Akiva paid no heed to the warnings and went into the infected areas to help the sick people and comfort them. The King of Prussia, Fredric the Third, who heard of the Rov's heroic actions, honored him with a special badge of excellence.

Library Sparks

A person once entered a jewelry store observing it's vast display. Not finding anything he really cared for he turned to the salesperson and asked if he has anything more to offer. The salesman had nothing more to show, but he turned on the spotlights from above the counter, and the gems suddenly started shining, glowing and showing off all it's beautiful colors. The astonished customer wowed at the magnificent jewels he was now seeing! This is exactly what the light of *Chassidus* does to us! It shows us the beauty of *yiddishkeit* in a more revealed manner. (As our MC explained during our opening event)

The Baal Shem Tov taught his Chassidim not to fight or suppress the *guf* (body), but to serve Hashem by uplifting it. As the Posuk says: **כִּי תִרְאֶה הָמוּר שׁוֹנֵאךְ** Chamor stands for the materialistic body, your enemy, that pulls you away from *ruchnius*. Says the posuk: **וְהִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֵיבֹב לוֹ**. Don't avoid it or fight it. **עֵיבֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ**. Join it! Your body is the treasure chest for your *Neshama*! The only way our *Neshama* can serve Hashem is with

its vessel. And by using the *guf* to serve Hashem we thereby elevate *gashmius* to *ruchnius*. As the Arizal explains in the posuk: **רַעֲיָנִים גַּם צִמְאִים נִפְשִׁים בָּהֶם תִּתְעַשֵּׂךְ**. The very reason Hashem created a body that can't survive without food, which is a *tzomaiach*, a lower level than adam is because there are hidden divine sparks in food which are uplifted when consumed for the purpose of serving Hashem with the energy it gives him.

This concept is highlighted on Erev Yom Kippur when it is a great mitzvah to eat and drink so that we can serve Hashem with the *chayus* derived from it. A person reaches an angelic level on Yom Kippur as he conducts himself in a manner that is almost completely devoid of materialism. A yid even gets *chayus* out of fasting as is meant by the words: *ilchayosam bara'av* - through your hunger you shall live. The mitzvah of eating on Erev Yom Kippur is so exceedingly great that it is then considered like one fasted two days, as chazal say **כָּל הָאוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתָה בְּתַשְׁיִי כְּאִילוֹ הִתְעַנָּה תַשְׁיִי וְעֵשְׂרִי**.

Gemar Chasimah Tovah!

The Baal Shem Tov Library

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Halacha Sparks

Canvas Sukkah

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

Is it permissible to *lechatchila* make a sukkah with walls of canvas?

A *sukkah* wall which billows in regular winds, even if the wind does not have the strength to it knock down, is not considered a kosher wall for a *sukkah*.

There is a *machlokes* among contemporary poskim how much, if at all, the sheets can billow in the wind before the sukkah becomes *posul*. Some say² that if it is stretched tightly and does not wave more than three *tefachim* it is kosher. Others³ invalidate any *sukkah* with walls made of canvas or plastic sheets.

Poskim grapple with an additional problem concerning a *sukkah* made of sheets. The Shulchan Aruch⁴ states, "It is improper to make all the walls [of a *sukkah*] out of sheets of linen, even if he tied down the sheets well, because they can get untied without him noticing and they will then be a 'wall that cannot stand before a regular wind' [which is not valid as a *sukkah* wall]." The Shulchan Aruch suggests adding rods around the walls of the *sukkah* with less than three *tefachim* between them, to serve as independent halachic walls. This is based on the principle of '*lovud*,' that two objects less than three *tefachim* apart from each other are considered to be connected.

Some *poskim*⁵, in an effort to justify the widespread use of canvas *sukkos*, say that today's sheets are different than the sheets referred to in the Shulchan Aruch. Today's canvas' are tied down on all four sides and are made of strong durable material, often with special holes made to allow the canvas to be fastened to the frame. This holds the fabric tight and secure without a realistic concern that they'll become dislodged, and therefore the issue raised by the Shulchan Aruch no longer applies.

As mentioned, others nevertheless categorically invalidate canvas *sukkos* and one each person should consult his *posek* for a final *psak*. Rav Moshe Feinstein points out⁶ that nothing can be concluded from the fact that such *sukkos* are sold, because this was not necessarily done after consultation with *rabbonim*.

- 1 - משנה ברורה סי' תרל"ט ס"ק מח ושעה"צ ס"ק מה בשם רש"י, ר"ן, ריטב"א, ואור זרוע.
- 2 - חזון איש הל' ערובין סי' עז סק"ו, והביא סייע לדבריו בשו"ת קנין תורה ח"ד סי' ע.
- 3 - יחזק דעת ח"ג סי' מ, וחזק דבריו בספרו יביע אומר ח"ט הגמ"ח.
- 4 - סי' תרל"ט ס"י.
- 5 - שו"ת שלמת חיים סי' רג, משנה הלכות ח"ה סי' עז, וראה במהדורות החדשות מה שהביא מהמחבר"ל הל' סוכה, מועדים וזמנים ח"א סי' פד, ספר משנת יעקב ה"ד בספר סוכה שלם על הל' סוכה פ"ה הע' כז וכבר נשתברו הרבה קולמסין בראיות לכאן ולכאן, ולא עת האסף פה.
- 6 - אג"מ א"ח ח"ה סי' מ סוף אות ב, וראה שם סי' לט אות ג.