

SAMCHAINU GUIDE TO THE HALACHOS OF YOM KIPPUR

A SELECTION OF LAWS & CUSTOMS WITH A FOCUS ON SINGLE MOTHER FAMILIES

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The *של"ה הקדוש* writes that learning and properly observing the Halachos of a *חג* infuse the Yom Tov with tremendous Bracha. Please note that the Halachos and Minhagim contained in this article follow the custom of *בני אשכנז*.

אכילה בערב יום כיפור

There is a מצוה to eat and make סעודות on יום כיפור. According to some, it's a מצוה מדאורייתא. Any act of eating or drinking that is done on יום כיפור, even if it is not part of a formal meal is a מצוה. Many פוסקים hold that women are also commanded in the mitzvah to eat on ערב יום טוב.

The *רא"ש* says that the special day of יום כיפור was given to us מאהבת הקב"ה. Hashem commanded us to fast for our own benefit, so that we can achieve סליחה וכפרה. In order to avoid any harm that might result from fasting, Hashem gave us a separate מצוה to prepare for the fast by eating and drinking on ערב יום כיפור. These סעודות enable us to fast properly and healthily. The *חפץ חיים* adds that if we eat and drink on ערב יום כיפור, Hashem in His kindness considers it as if we fasted for two days, ערב יום כיפור and יום כיפור itself. לפום צערא אגרא is the concept that our reward for a Mitzvah is commensurate with how difficult it was for us to do the מצוה. Since Hashem considers our eating as if we fasted for two days, the reward for fulfilling the easy Mitzvah of eating on Erev Yom Kippur is similar to the reward for fasting for two days! The *יונה רבינו* explains that eating on ערב יום כיפור is to express שמחת יו"ט, since we do not have an actual סעודת יום כיפור on יום טוב.

The מצוה to eat applies during the daytime of ערב יום טוב (not the night before.)

There is a מנהג to have a סעודה in the morning. However, the main meal, referred to as the סעודה המפסקת, takes place in the afternoon, after מנחה.

At the סעודה המפסקת, one should eat only easily-digestible foods, so as not to feel uncomfortable and overly full. It is best to avoid dairy products at the Seudah. Chicken is preferred over meat, since it is easier to digest.

Before bentsching at the conclusion of the סעודה, it is best to verbalize that one is not yet ready to accept ("be mekabel") the fast. If you did not verbalize, but had this thought in mind, you may still eat until the start of the fast. Even if you didn't have this in mind at all, you may continue eating after bentsching, as long as you are not accustomed to accepting the fast with bentsching.

After the סעודה המפסקת, there is a מנהג to bentsch children with the traditional Bracha of "ישמך אלקים" and "יברכך". There is a special "יהי רצון" added to the Bracha, the text of which can be found in a מחזור. Mothers can and should bentsch their children.

וידוי

There is a מצוה דאורייתא of וידוי on Yom Kippur. Women are obligated in this Mitzvah as well.

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ידוי is also said on ערב יום כיפור during מנחה. Women should try to say the ידוי during Mincha. If it is difficult for a woman to say the entire ידוי, she should try to say at least the paragraph of "אשמנו".

During ידוי, you should stand, without the support of a wall or other object. Someone who cannot stand without support is permitted to lean.

הדלקת הנרות

Two ברכות are recited when bentching licht on Erev Yom Kippur:

1. להדליק נר של יום הכיפורים.
2. שהחיינו.

עינויים

Yom Kippur is the only מדאורייתא fast, and must be strictly observed by anyone above בר/בת מצוה. If someone has a serious health problem, they should speak to a Rav before Yom Kippur to discuss their specific health concerns.

Leather shoes may not be worn on Yom Kippur. Since one accepts Yom Tov immediately upon lighting candles, leather shoes should be removed prior to lighting.

One may not wash the hands or any other part of the body on Yom Kippur. Washing just the hands until the knuckle is allowed for a permitted reason only. Situations permitting one to wash until the knuckle include washing for Negel Vaaser, washing soiled hands, or washing after using the bathroom.

MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

If a woman has young children at home and is unable to go to Shul, she should know that her primary Mitzvah is to care for her family. However, if she does have the chance to daven, even for a short while, she should try to take advantage of the special opportunity to daven on Yom Kippur.

Chazal tell us, "אחד המרבה ואחד המעמיט, ומלבד שיכון לבו לשמים". Even a small Tefillah with כוונה is very special to הקב"ה.

יזכור

יזכור is said on Yom Kippur between שחרית and מוסף. It may be said at home.

A Yartzeit candle should be lit on ערב יום טוב by anyone in the household who will be saying Yizkor.

One should pledge Tzedakah as a zechus for the נשמה of the departed family member. In the עולם האמת, a נשמה is also granted כפרה on Yom Kippur.

הבדלה

Ideally, the fast should not be broken until after the הבדלה is made. Someone who is waiting for others to make the הבדלה and finds the wait difficult can say "ברוך המבדיל" and can then drink only water until after the הבדלה is made.

הבדלה on Yom Kippur is made without בשמים.