The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רפ"ח סעיף ג'-ד'

Overview

Siman 288 Seif 3:

Regarding someone who fasts every day and eating would cause him distress since it changes his regular behavior, some report that they observed many pious people and men of action who fasted on Shabbos for this reason and it is related that R' Yehudah HaChassid z"l fasted on Shabbos for this reason.

- If eating will not cause distress it is prohibited even if one's intent is to fast over one's sins to repent. (M.B. 5)

Siman 288 Seif 4:

It is permitted to fast for a dream to tear the bad decree but one must then fast on Sunday to atone for the transgression of neglecting oneg Shabbos. If one is weak and unable to fast for two consecutive days he should not fast on Sunday and should fast on some other day. Certainly, if Sunday was Chanukah, Rosh Chodesh, Purim, Yom Tov, even the 2nd day of Yom Tov observed in exile, one fasts on another day. Some maintain that if one slept in the afternoon and had a bad dream, he should fast half the day and half the night and then recite havdalah and then on Sunday he should fast as though he had fasted for all of Shabbos.

- If someone had a bad dream about a friend and related the dream to his friend the friend should not fast even though during the week he would fast. Elsewhere Magen Avrohom implies that during the week the one who had the dream should fast. (M.B. 6)
- The day should be spent studying Torah and davening for atonement. Seder HaYom permits confessing one's sins as he would during the week. Taz writes that one who was thinking about something during the day and then dreamed about it that night is not required to fast since the dream emanated from his thoughts rather than from Hashem. (M.B. 7)
- If there is an obligatory fast on Sunday he must fast on another day. Others dissent and contend that the obligatory fast will satisfy his obligation to fast for neglecting oneg Shabbos. One for whom fasting is difficult may follow the lenient opinion. (M.B. 8)
- If there is only a custom not to fast on Sunday one may fast for having fasted on Shabbos. (M.B. 9)
- Magen Avrohom asserts that one may fast on Rosh Chodesh Nissan since that is a day observed as a fast by righteous people. (M.B. 10)
- One must fast as soon as possible. (M.B. 11)
- Some are lenient and require one to fast only until nightfall and one may rely on this opinion when Yom Tov falls after Shabbos. If one had a bad dream at night there is a disagreement whether one may eat that night before dawn. (M.B. 13)

Halacha Highlight

Fasting on Shabbos for a bad dream

Shulchan Aruch Siman 288 Seif 4

מתר להתענות בו תענית חלום

It is permitted to fast on it for a bad dream

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') rules that it is permitted for one to fast on Shabbos if he experiences a bad dream in order to tear up the negative decree against him. The time he would have spent eating should be utilized for Torah study and prayer so that he will achieve atonement. Seder HaYom adds that one who is fasting on Shabbos may even confess his sins the same way that he would during the week (מ"ב סק"ז). If one actually fasts on Shabbos, one also must fast on Sunday to atone for the fact that one neglected the mitzvah of enjoying Shabbos. If fasting two consecutive days would be difficult, one may fast for neglecting oneg Shabbos on another day.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ז) cites Taz who maintains that if one was thinking about something during the day and then had a bad dream about that thing that night, he does not fast on Shabbos. The reason is that in such a case it is assumed that it was one's thoughts that generated the dream rather than it representing a message from the Heavens. For this reason Chazon Ish disregarded bad dreams and would not fast, ameliorate his dreams (הטבת חלום) or even recite the prayer of רבונו של עולם recited during birkas kohanim. This was due to his perspective that dreams nowadays do not represent a message from the Heavens, they are merely a composite of one's thoughts (אחרות רבינו ח"ג עמ' ר"י"ג). Others echo this same sentiment and write that it is very rare that one would fast nowadays for a bad dream, even if it is one of the dreams that Chazal identify as a bad dream (See seif 5). Certainly one would not fast on Shabbos or Yom Tov since they are almost always the result of one's thoughts or eating or drinking right before going to sleep. Additionally, since fasting leaves one irritable and one may easily succumb to reacting negatively to others, it is not wise for a person to fast for a bad dream without guidance (פסקי תשובות אות ד').