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

Overview

Siman 418 Seif 1:

It is prohibited to fast on Rosh Chodesh.

- The community of Worms fasts on Rosh Chodesh Sivan for the calamities that befell their community and they recite *selichos* and supplications. (M.B. 1)

Siman 418 Seif 2:

We do not decree fast days on the community on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah or Purim. If they decreed a series of fasts and the series began before Rosh Chodesh, even one day, they do not interrupt the series and they must complete the fast.

- If they decreed a fast it is not binding and they do not have to fast. (M.B. 3)
- They did not realize that one of the days in the series will be Rosh Chodesh. (M.B. 4)
- Chol HaMoed is the same as Chanukah, Purim and Rosh Chodesh. These halachos apply to a *tzibbur* but nowadays even a *tzibbur* is categorized as individuals and we do not fast on Rosh Chodesh and make it up another day. (M.B. 5)

Siman 418 Seif 3:

If an individual committed to fast for a certain number of days and one of those days is Rosh Chodesh or if one committed to fast on Rosh Chodesh, if his commitment was general, he does not have to be released from that commitment. If his commitment included the phrase, "It is incumbent upon me," which is language of a vow, he must go to a scholar for release (See Yoreh Deah *siman* 215:3).

- *Poskim* write that one does not have to make up the fast. However, it appears to me that this applies when one committed to fast, for example, on Monday and Thursday throughout the year and Rosh Chodesh fell on one of those days so that we could say that his commitment did not include a day when it is prohibited to fast and he need not make up the fast. However, if he committed to fast for a certain number of days he must make up Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh when he skips the fast. (M.B. 7)
- Vows take effect on *mitzvos*. (M.B. 8)

Halacha Highlight

Fasting on Rosh Chodesh

Shulchan Aruch Siman 418 Seif 1
ראש חדש אסור בתענית
It is prohibited to fast on Rosh Chodesh

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that it is prohibited to fast on Rosh Chodesh. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) takes note of the fact that the city of Worms has the custom to fast on Rosh Chodesh Sivan to commemorate the day the crusades attacked the Jews of the city and not only do they fast but they also recite *selichos* and supplications. Rama MiPano writes that one should not point to the practice in Worms as precedent for anything similar, even as far as reciting supplications of Rosh Chodesh since their circumstance was unique.

Biur Halacha (ד"ה ראש חדש) expresses uncertainty whether one is permitted to fast for a predetermined number of hours (תענית שעות) on Rosh Chodesh. He seems to imply that the issue relates to whether the prohibition against fasting on Rosh Chodesh is Biblical or Rabbinic. Biur Halacha then writes that the Gemara seems to imply that fasting for a number of hours is prohibited on Rosh Chodesh according to all opinions. The Gemara Taanis (15b) records R' Meir's comment that even Rabban Gamliel would agree that when a series of fasts were begun before Rosh Chodesh and therefore will be observed on Rosh Chodesh, we do not complete those fasts. In other words, they will only fast for a number of hours. The implication is that if it were not part of a series of fasts that were begun before Rosh Chodesh, it would be prohibited to fast for a number of hours of Rosh Chodesh. Biur Halacha concludes by noting that Pri Megadim is also uncertain about Magen Avrohom's analysis and then notes that the Gaon Yaakov writes that any day one is not permitted to fast for the entire day, is also prohibited to fast for even part of the day. Kaf HaChaim (אות ג') emphasizes that this is true when a person makes a commitment to fast on Rosh Chodesh for a certain number of hours. However, a person who is too busy and does not get around to eating for an extended period of time has not violated this restriction.