The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Fri, Jul 21, 2023 ■ ג' אב, תשפ"ג
סימן תקס"ב סעיף ו'-ח'

Overview

Siman 562 Seif 6:

When does one commit to fast? In *tefilas mincha* either in שומע תפלה or after one completes the *amidah* but before moving his feet. He should declare," הריני בתענית יחיד מחר יהי רצון שתהא תפלתי ביום תעניתי מקבלת." If one did not articulate this commitment but mentally made the commitment that he will fast the next day, it is a binding commitment provided that he mentally considered the matter at the time of *mincha*. It is preferred to commit to fast after *davening* than during *davening* so that he does not interrupt his *tefila*.

- The commitment must be made close to the beginning of the fast. It would seem that *l'chatchila* the commitment should be made at *mincha ketana* which is at 9 ½ hours into the day rather than earlier but *b'dieved* a commitment made from *mincha gedola* will also be effective. Later authorities write that *b'dieved* if one did not make the commitment during *mincha* it can be made as long as it is still day. (M.B. 27)
- This is to emphasize that he is not committing to the restrictions of a communal fast. *B'dieved* even if he made a generic commitment he would only have to observe the restrictions of a private fast. (M.B. 29)
- This works only if he mentally makes the same commitment that should be articulated but if he merely has in mind that he will fast he has not made a binding commitment and he may retract. However, if he began to fast it is prohibited for him to eat unless he is *matir neder*. (M.B. 30)
- Fasting is similar to a vow to give *tzedaka* that is binding even if one makes a mental commitment. (M.B. 31)
- The commitment to fast is not prayer related. Authorities write that it is best to mentally commit in שומע תפלה to fast the next day. (M.B. 34)

Siman 562 Seif 7:

If one committed to fast during *mincha*, even though he ate and drank that night he does not lose anything. Similarly, if one committed to fast for three or four consecutive days or even more and his commitment was to fast during the day but not at night, even though he eats at night it does not have an effect since his initial commitment covered all the fasts even though he did not make the commitment each day during *mincha* for the following day. If one committed to fast on two consecutive days it is permitted to drink during the night between unless he explicitly indicated that he was fasting at night and in such a case he should recite עננו each day during *mincha*.

- A generic commitment does not include the night. (M.B. 36)
- There is an error in the text and it should read, "nevertheless, he should add עננו each day during *mincha*." (M.B. 37)

Siman 562 Seif 8:

If one committed during *mincha* to fast for three or four days but not consecutively, for example, he committed to fast on a Monday, Thursday and Monday or something similar, it is uncertain if one commitment will cover all of the fasts or whether one must commit to each one separately. However, the custom is to commit to them at once and that is sufficient and this is the opinion of some authorities.

- This is the basis of the custom on the Shabbos after Pesach and Sukkos to bless the people who will fast *baha"b* and when the people answer אמן they have made their commitment. However, if one chooses to not fast that option is available since he did not articulate his commitment. (M.B. 39)

Halacha Highlight

Adding the phrase בלי נדר to one's commitment to fast

Shulchan Aruch Siman 562 Seif 6
הריני בתענית יחיד למחר
I will observe a private fast tomorrow

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ו') presents the wording one should use to commit to fast. One must say, "I will observe a private fast tomorrow. May it be that my prayer on the day that I am fasting should be accepted." In the event that rather than articulate one's commitment one mentally committed to fast, it is also binding provided that one made the mental commitment while he *davened mincha*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ל) emphasizes that he must mentally commit using similar language to the oral commitment but if one merely decides to fast, it is not considered a binding commitment and he may still retract that commitment. Although when making vows and oaths it is necessary for one to verbalize the vow or oath, when it comes to committing to fast it is similar to a vow to give *tzedaka* that is binding as soon as one makes the mental decision to do so. Taz writes that since fasting diminishes one's fat and blood it is comparable to a *korban* and regarding a *korban* the Torah indicates that a mental commitment is sufficient (מ"ב ס"ק ל"א).

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה תעניות פי"ג דבר הלכה אות י"א) and Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (קובץ תשובות ח"א סי נ"ז) maintain that if one adds the phrase בלי נדר to his commitment to fast, he has not made a binding commitment. Teshuvas L'Horos Nassan (ח"ט סי י"ד) notes that when pledging to give *tzedaka* Shulchan Aruch (יו"ד סי ר"ג סע' ד') writes that one should add the phrase בלי נדר thereby implying that adding the phrase בלי נדר does not diminish from the binding nature of the commitment which seemingly refutes the position adopted by Rav Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv. L'Horos Nassan answers that one fulfills the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka* even if he does not make a prior commitment to give *tzedaka*, therefore, it is preferred for one who pledges to give *tzedaka* to preface his pledge with the phrase בלי נדר. In contrast, a fast cannot be observed in the absence of a prior commitment and thus adding the phrase בלי נדר diminishes from that commitment.