The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תקע"ה סעיף א'-ז'

Overview

Siman 575 Seif 1:

The procedure for fasting in Eretz Yisroel when there is no rain is as follows: When the 17th of Marcheshvan arrives and the rain did not fall the Torah scholars fast for three days, Monday, Thursday and Monday. All the students qualify for this fast and the *halachos* of these fasts is the same as a private fast.

- They can begin even on the 17th itself. (M.B. 2)
- All students are obligated to fast provided that they are capable of answering questions related to the material that they are studying so that they qualify as a Torah scholar and must fast but if he has not reached that stage, the fast is optional and others may not fast. (M.B. 3)
- This means that we interrupt the series if they coincide with Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah or Purim. He must also commit to fast the day before similar to private fasts. (M.B. 4)

Siman 575 Seif 2:

If Rosh Chodesh Kislev arrives and the rain has not fallen, *bais din* decrees three fasts on the *tzibbur*, Monday, Thursday, Monday and everyone enters the *bais haknesses* to pray, cry out and supplicate as they do on other fasts.

- We read ויחל in *shacharis* and *mincha* as is done on other fasts. (M.B. 5)

Siman 575 Seif 3:

If these fasts pass and they were not answered, *bais din* decrees another three fasts to be observed on Monday, Thursday, Monday and we stop eating while it is yet day for these fasts and *melacha* is prohibited by day although permitted at night. It is prohibited to bathe one's entire body in warm water, therefore the bathhouses are locked but one may wash his face, hands and feet in cold water and his entire body in cold water. Anointing is prohibited unless the intent is to remove one's foul odor. Marital relations are prohibited and one may not wear leather shoes in the city. We pray in the *bais haknesses* and supplicate as on other fasts.

- Meaning it is prohibited to eat from *bein hashemashos*. (M.B. 6)
- This is true even if there is no famine yet and it is the night of immersion. (M.B. 8)

Siman 575 Seif 4:

If these fasts pass (and they were not answered) *bais din* decrees another 7 fasts, on Monday, Thursday, Monday, etc. and whatever was prohibited on the previous 3 fasts is prohibited on these fasts and on these fasts they also blow the *shofar* in conjunction with the *berachos* that are added. We pray in the street and have an elder issue a message of rebuke. The 6 *berachos* are added in *shacharis* and *mincha*. We lock the stores but on Monday as it gets close to dark we open it a little (those stores that sell food and beverages) **so that people could purchase food for the break fast and on Thursday those stores that sell food may be open all day to honor Shabbos. If a store has two entrances, one is opened and the other remains locked. If the store has a bench in front of the entrance it can be opened in the normal manner on Thursday without concern.**

- Gevuras Ari rules that non-food stores are closed on Monday and Thursday for the entire day. (M.B. 11)
- Since beverages will be available on *erev* Shabbos one may not sell them on Thursday. (M.B. 13)

Siman 575 Seif 5:

Pregnant and nursing women fast but not on the first three fasts or last seven fasts but they should only eat what is necessary to maintain the health of the fetus.

- It is not clear whether one who is too weak to fast all the decreed fasts must fast at all. (M.B. 17)

Siman 575 Seif 6:

After these 13 fasts were decreed if their prayers were not answered they do not decree any additional fasts. This is true when they were fasting for rain since once these days passed the time for rain passed and it will provide no further benefit but concerning other troubles they continue to fast until their prayers are answered.

Siman 575 Seif 7:

When fasting for rain and the 13 fasts passed without their prayers answered, we diminish business, celebratory construction (unless a wall is falling) **as well as betrothal and weddings unless one has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *p'ru u'rvu*. We limit our greetings to friends and Torah scholars greet one another as one who is censured and banned from the Omnipresent. If an *am ha'aretz* wishes one Shalom one should respond in a quiet and grave manner. Torah scholars continue fasting on Mondays and Thursdays until the spring season passes. On these fasts it is permitted to eat at night, perform *melacha* and other activities and they do not fast on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim. When Nissan of the *tekufah* has passed, which is when the sun reaches the beginning of the constellation of שור, they stop fasting since rain at that point is a sign of a curse since it did not rain when it was supposed to fall.**

- This restriction is in force for construction that is done for beauty or to merely generate additional space. (M.B. 18)
- This is true even if the wall does not pose a danger. (M.B. 19)
- Meaning betrothal is not performed altogether. (M.B. 20)
- This is 30 days after the start of spring. (M.B. 21)

Halacha Highlight

Nursing women fasting

Shulchan Aruch Siman 575 Seif 5

עברות ומניקות מתענות

Pregnant and nursing women fast

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ה') rules that pregnant and nursing women must fast. He then qualifies this statement by adding that they do not fast the first set of 3 fasts nor do they fast the last set of 7 fasts. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ט"ז) explains that pregnant and nursing women do not fast the first set of 3 fasts since Hashem's anger is not so strong yet. The reason they do not fast the last set of 7 fasts is that it is too much for them to handle. Although they are not obligated to fast the first and last set of fasts, nevertheless, Shulchan Aruch rules that they should not eat more than necessary to maintain the health of their fetus or baby. He then raises the question why don't they fast at least 3 of those 7 fasts since if they are obligated to fast the middle set of 3 fasts that clearly indicates that they are capable of fasting on those days. He answers that once they will be incapable of fasting all of the fasts they are exempt from the enactment altogether. Along these lines, Mishnah Berurah cites Magen Avrohom who maintains that if the *tzibbur* issues a decree to fast a set of 3 fasts and a person is too weak to fast all three fasts, he is not required to fast altogether.

Da'as Torah (סי' תק"נ סע' א') based on the Gemara in Niddah (9a) rules that for 24 months after delivering her baby she is considered nursing and she may be lenient with regards to fasting the 4 fasts. This is true even when she is no longer nursing. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (הלכות ומנהגי בין המצרים פ"ב הע' 12) maintains that the custom is not to be lenient once a woman stopped nursing. Rav Nissim Karelitz (חוט שני שבת ח"ד עמ' ר"ס אות ג') also writes that once a woman stops nursing and she feels as healthy as other women, she is obligated to fast.