The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Fri, Aug 9, 2024 ■ ה' אב, תשפ"ד
סימן תקע"ה סעיף ה'-ט'

Overview

Siman 576 Seif 5:

The same is true when fasting for someone who is ill. What are the circumstances? If an illness has struck many people in the same city, for example אסכרה (A condition that closes the throat related to ויסכרו מעינת תהום) **or חרחור or some similar condition and people are dying from the condition, it is considered an affliction of the *tzibbur* and they decree a fast and blow blasts. Similarly, regarding moist boils which are a variety of contagious boils, if most people are affected by the condition they fast and blow blasts but if the boils are dry we only cry out.** Regarding these conditions it is unnecessary that they should die over the course of three consecutive days as is true concerning a plague which is weather related; rather they fast and blow blasts for these conditions immediately.

- We also decree a fast when sores appear on babies leading to death. (M.B. 14)
- Bach maintains that this variety of boils warrants fasting even if people are not dying due to the intense pain they cause but it must have spread to the majority of the *tzibbur*. (M.B. 17)
- Ritva asserts that three people must die from the condition although it is unnecessary for them to die over the course of three days. Bais Yosef cites other sources that indicate that if even one person dies from אסכרה we fast but many people must be afflicted with the condition. (M.B. 18)

Siman 576 Seif 6:

Similarly, when wild animals have been sent, even if it didn't damage and just appeared, they fast and blow blasts in all places, even distant places but if they were not sent, it is assumed to be merely by chance that it appeared. What is the definition of "sent?" If it appears in the city during the day it was "sent." If it appeared in the field during the day and saw two people and did not flee it was "sent" but if the field is near a meadow and saw two people and pursued them it is considered "sent" but if it did not pursue them it was not "sent." If it was in a meadow, even if it pursued them it was not "sent" unless it killed both of them but only ate one of them but if it ate both of them in the meadow it was not sent since that is its location and it killed them out of hunger and it is not considered "sent."

- It is unclear why Rema did not add that they must be part of the same country as he does in *seif* 8 or why he did not disagree in *seif* 1 or 12 by adding that distant cities within the same country must also fast. (M.B. 19)
- The same is true if it is in a large forest. (M.B. 23)
- Even though it ate one of them it is considered "sent" since it killed one person and did not eat him and it would certainly be considered "sent" if it did not eat either of them. (M.B. 25)

Siman 576 Seif 7:

Regarding houses built in the wilderness or desolate lands, since they are places where groups of wild animals live, if an animal climbed to the roof and grabbed a child from its crib (a small bed similar to the *pasuk*: הנה ערשו ערש ברזל) **it was "sent" but if it did not reach this point it is not considered "sent" since these people put themselves in danger and went to a place of wild animals. Regarding other creeping land animals or birds that were "sent" and injured others, for example, snakes and scorpions that were sent but do not kill and certainly wasps, mosquitos and similar creatures we do not fast or blow blasts.**

- If they kill we fast even for wasps and mosquitos. Some maintain that even if we haven't confirmed that the snakes and scorpions are deadly, we fast. (M.B. 26)

Siman 576 Seif 8:

Similarly, regarding ירקון and שדפון that have begun to strike the grain, even if it began in only one place and affected no more than "the mouth of an oven" we fast and blow blasts (even people far away provided that they are in the same country).

- ירקון is grain whose appearance changed and שדפון is wind that dislodges the grain from its ear. The measure of "the mouth of the oven" refers to the grain that could form a cover over the oven or a row of bread that attaches to the mouth of an oven, one next to the other or one atop of another. (M.B. 27)
- If the condition is not contagious they fast but do not blow blasts. (M.B. 28)

Siman 576 Seif 9:

Similarly, regarding ארבה and חסיל, even if only one is spotted in all of Eretz Yisroel, even if it did not destroy any grain, we fast and blow blasts as we do if גובאי (A variety of locust) **are seen regardless of the quantity that are found. For חגב we do not fast or blow blasts, we only cry out. Nowadays, since we cannot discern between the different species, we blow blasts for all of them.**

Halacha Highlight

Plagues vs. ilnesses

Shulchan Aruch Siman 576 Seif 5

מתענין על החלאים

We fast about illnesses

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ה') states that we also decree fasts for illnesses. He proceeds to enumerate a number of illnesses that warrant decreeing a fast. Rema then adds that regarding these other illnesses, in contrast to a plague which is the result of a change in air, it is unnecessary for people to die over the course of three consecutive days and we fast and blow blasts immediately when people become afflicted with these illnesses.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) cites Ritva who maintains that in order for these illnesses to warrant a fast it is necessary for three people to die, what is not necessary is that they should die over the course of three consecutive days and if three people die on the same day or over the course of more than three days it is necessary for the *tzibbur* to fast. The reason for the distinction is that a plague is the term used when people die from different illnesses and it is only when three people die over the course of three days that we know there is a plague. In contrast, when three people die from the same illness, even if they die on the same day we know that there is a dangerous illness present in the community that warrants fasting. Along these lines, Teshuvas Divrei Malkiel (ח"ב סי' צ') explains that a plague is identified when people die suddenly with a greater frequency than normal and the frequency that is seen as dangerous to the community is when three people die over the course of three consecutive days.