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

Overview

Siman 580 Seif 1:

The following are days on which tragedies occurred to our ancestors thereby making it appropriate to fast. Even though some of these days coincide with Rosh Chodesh there is an opinion who maintains that one should fast (And it is best not to complete the fast on Rosh Chodesh).

- Some maintain that these days were instituted during the time of the Talmud and a *ba'al nefesh* should be strict when possible. Someone who is not accustomed to observe these fasts and a personal tragedy befalls him and wants to fast on Rosh Chodesh Nissan should not fast since he regularly conducts himself in accordance with those who prohibit fasting. (M.B. 1)
- Sefer Chassidim writes that one should fast when there is a lunar eclipse. (M.B. 2)

Siman 580 Seif 2:

On the 1st of Nissan Aharon's sons died, on the 10th Miriam died and the well disappeared and on the 26th Yehoshua bin Nun died. On the 10th of Iyar Eli Hakohen and his sons died and the *aron* was kidnapped and on the 28th Shmuel HaNavi died. On the 23rd of Sivan they stopped bringing *bikkurim* to the *bais hamikdash* during the days of Yeravam ben Nevat, on the 25th R' Shimon ben Gamliel, R' Yishmael and R' Chanina the Sgan of the Kohanim were killed and on the 27th R' Chanina ben Teradyon was burned together with a *sefer torah*. On the 1st of Av Aharon HaKohen died and on the 8th the western lamp was extinguished during the days of Achaz. On the 17th of Elul those who spoke negatively about the land died. On the 5th of Tishrei 20 people died and R' Akiva was imprisoned and on the 7th it was decreed that our ancestors would die by sword, hunger and plague due to the golden calf. On the 7th of Marcheshvan Tzidkiyahu's eye's turned blind and his children were killed before him. On the 28th of Kislev Yehoyakim burned the *megilla* that was written by Baruch in accordance with Yirmiyahu's instructions. On the 8th of Teves during the times of King Ptolemy the Torah was written in Greek and there was darkness in the world for three days and on the 9th we are not certain which tragedy occurred. On the 5th of Shevat the elders from the time of Yehoshua died and on the 23rd the Jews gathered against Shevet Binyamin due to the incident of Pilegesh B'Givah. On the 7th of Adar Moshe Rabbeinu died and on the 9th Bais Shammai and Bais Hillel disagreed.

- There are sources that provide alternate dates than the dates recorded in Shulchan Aruch. (M.B. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14)
- In *Selichos* we indicate that Ezra HaSofer died on this day. (M.B. 13)
- There is a disagreement when to fast during a leap year and commonly people fast in Adar Rishon. (M.B. 15)

Siman 580 Seif 3:

There is an opinion that maintains that they decreed to fast on every Monday and Thursday over the destruction of the *bais hamikdash*, for the *sefer torah* that was burned and for the desecration of Hashem's Name and in the future Hashem will transform these days into days of happiness and rejoicing.

- Someone who cannot fast should *daven* on these days. Some fast from meat and wine, even the night before but in the summer when people eat before nightfall there is no need to be stringent unless one committed to treat that time as night once one *davened ma'ariv*. Arizal indicates that one should fast due to the burning of the *sefer torah*. Sefer HaTanya writes that one should fast on Friday of Parshas Chukas since 20 wagons filled with *sefarim* were burned and two large communities were destroyed on that day. It is also customary to fast on the 20th of Sivan. Sha'arei Teshuvah writes that these fasts are observed by males above 18 and females above 15. (M.B. 16)

Halacha Highlight

Fasting on the day the spies died

Shulchan Aruch Siman 580 Seif 2

מתו מוציאי דבת הארץ

Those who spoke negatively about the land died

In this *siman* Shulchan Aruch presents many days upon which tragedies befell our ancestors and as a result it is appropriate to fast on them. One of the days that is mentioned is 17th [of 7th (מ"ב סק"ז)] of Elul, which is the day that the spies who spoke negatively about Eretz Yisroel died. Mishnah Berurah (שם) references Bais Yosef who questions the statement that the spies died in Elul when the *pesukim* and Chazal indicate that following their false report their tongues extended to their navels which would have occurred some time around the 9th of Av. He answers that although they began to suffer immediately following their false report, they suffered for an extended period of time and did not die until the 17th of Elul.

Another question Bais Yosef raises (מ"ב סק"ח) is that the spies were wicked and the *pasuk* declares: באבד רשעים רנה—There is rejoicing upon the destruction of the wicked. Why then would we fast on the day they died, seemingly it should be a day for celebration. He answers that it should be assumed that they repented but their repentance was not accepted and thus we fast. Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ או"ח ח"ג סי' י"ד) explains that Bais Yosef does not mean that the spies repented and are considered righteous and that is why we fast since, in fact, Hashem did not accept their repentance. Furthermore, even if their repentance was accepted we would not fast since we only fast to commemorate outstanding righteous people and the spies would not have qualified as outstanding righteous people even if their repentance was accepted. Additionally, since their transgression was so severe, repentance by itself would not provide atonement and their death would also be necessary so their death would actually prove beneficial for them rather than tragic. The actual intent of the fast is to convey the message that complete repentance can be difficult and one should be concerned that his sins may prevent him from complete repentance.