



- ▶ **Compiled by Moishe Dovid Lebovits**
- ▶ Reviewed by Rabbi Benzion Schiffenbauer Shlita
- ▶ All Piskei Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita
are reviewed by Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita

Halachos of Fast Days

Many people feel that a fast day is a day to sleep and relax. However, a fast day is really a time for retrospecting and doing *teshuva*. Many different *halachos* are discussed in the *Shulchan Aruch* and the *poskim* regarding different questions that come up on a fast day. These *halachos* will be discussed in detail below.

It is a *mitzvah d'rabanan* to fast on a *yom tzara*.¹ *Chazal* have said that on four days out of the year we have to fast because of tragic occurrences that happened to the *yidin*. These four fasts are the *seventeenth* day of *Tamuz*, the ninth of *Av*, the fast of *Gedalya*, and the tenth day of *Teves*.²

The main focus of a fast day is to do *teshuva*³ by thinking of ways to fix our past misdeeds.⁴ Sitting idly and saying “when is this fast going to be over, so I can eat” is losing focus of the main point of the fast day.⁵

Occurrences

Five tragic occurrences happened on the *seventeenth* day of *Tamuz*: 1. *Moshe Rabbeinu*

broke the *luchos* when he came down from *Har Sinai* and saw the *eigel*.⁶ 2. The *karbon tamid* was no longer brought in the first *bais hamikdosh*. 3. The destruction of the second *bais hamikdosh* started. 4. *Apostomos* burnt the *Torah*. 5. A *tzelem* was placed in the *heichel*.⁷ On *Tisha B'av* the following tragedies happened: 1. *Klal Yisroel* were told they were not going into *Eretz Yisroel* because they wept in vain after hearing the evil report of the *meraglim*. 2. The first and second *bais hamikdosh* were destroyed. 3. *Beitar*, which was home to thousands of Jews, was captured by the Romans. 4. *Turnisrupos* surrounded the *heichel*.⁸ On the third day of *Tishrei*:⁹ *Gedalya*, who was the governor of *Yerushalayim*, was killed, and all the Jews of *Yerushalayim* were exiled or killed.¹⁰ On the tenth day of *Teves*: *Nevuchanetzar* laid siege to *Yerushalayim* which marked the end for the city and for the *Bais Hamikdosh*.¹¹

¹ Refer to Zecharya 8:19, Rambam Hilchos Taanis 1:4, 5:4, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:1, Mishnah Berurah 549:1, Aruch Ha'shulchan 549:4. See Moadim V'zemanim 5:332.

² Rambam Hilchos Taanis 5:2, Mishnah Berurah ibid.

³ Mesechtas Taanis 16a, Rambam Hilchos Taanis 1:2, 5:1, Magen Avraham 549:1, Machtzis Ha'shekel 1, Be'er Heitiv 549:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:1. A *taanis* should bring one to humility (Kad Ha'kemach Taanis page 443).

⁴ Mishnah Berurah ibid.

⁵ Mishnah Berurah ibid. Refer to Kad Hakemach (Taanis).

⁶ Refer to sefer Hatodah pages 364-365.

⁷ Mishnah Mesechtas Taanis 26b, Rambam Hilchos Taanis 5:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:4, Aruch Ha'shulchan 549:3, see sefer Hatodah page 369, Birchos Avraham (Moadim) pages 90-91. For other occurrences that happened on the *seventeenth* of *Tamuz* see sefer Hatodah page 369:32.

⁸ Mishnah Mesechtas Taanis 26b, Rambam Hilchos Taanis 5:3, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:5.

⁹ Some say that he died on the first day of *Tishrei*, and others say he died on the third day of *Tishrei* (sefer Hatodah pages 197-198).

¹⁰ Rambam Hilchos Taanis 5:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:2.

¹¹ Rambam Hilchos Taanis 5:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:3.

Who's obligated to fast?

Both men and women are obligated to fast on a fast day, and one should not be *poretz geder*.¹²

A pregnant or nursing woman who is in pain¹³ does not have to fast.¹⁴ In regard to this *halacha* a pregnant woman is someone who one can tell is carrying a child in her womb.¹⁵ Some say after forty days of pregnancy a woman is considered pregnant for this *halacha*.¹⁶ Less than this amount of time she is only exempt if she is in a lot of pain.¹⁷ Some say a woman who can nurse does not have to fast for twenty four months even if she does not actually nurse.¹⁸ A woman who is within thirty days of giving birth does not have to fast.¹⁹ These aforementioned *halachos* do not apply to *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*.²⁰

Many people think that women are exempt even if they do not fall under any of the above categories (i.e. they are not pregnant or nursing).²¹ However, it is highly questionable and women should fast

unless they feel weakened.²² A woman, who does not want to fast for whatever reason should discuss her situation with a *Rav*.

Children

The custom is that boys under thirteen and girls under twelve do not have to fast.²³ (This does not apply to *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*).²⁴ Although others say after a boy or girl is nine they should be trained to fast a little,²⁵ the custom is not like this.²⁶ Many boys have the custom to fast three fasts before they become *bar-mitzvah*. However, *Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l* maintains that this *minhag* does not have a source.²⁷ Some say when children do not fast they should only eat the amount of food they need, and should not eat a lot of food etc.²⁸ However, the custom seems to be not like this.²⁹

A sick person does not fast on a fast day.³⁰ If a doctor tells someone that he may not fast, then *al pi halacha* that person may not fast. This may apply to an older man.³¹ One who eats on a fast day (because

¹² Refer to Rambam Hilchos Taanis 1:4, Shulchan Aruch 550:1, Levush 550:1, Magen Avraham 550:1, Chai Adom 133:6, Mishnah Berurah 550:1, Aruch Ha'shulchan 459:5, see ibid 1, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:11, Yabea Omer O.C. 2:28:11, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:121.

¹³ Some say today, women who are pregnant or nursing do not fast whether they are in pain or not (Yechaveh Da'as 1:35).

¹⁴ Rama 550:1, Shulchan Aruch 554:5, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 550:1, Aruch Ha'shulchan 3, Vayivorech Dovid 1:63. This means they do not have to start fasting, and then stop if they cannot do it, but they should estimate before the fast if she will be in pain (Orchos Chaim Spinka 550:3).

¹⁵ M'or V'ketziah 550:page 147, Moed Lechol Chai 9:14, Mishnah Berurah 550:3, Aruch Ha'shulchan 5.

¹⁶ Mishnah Berurah ibid, Aruch Ha'shulchan ibid.

¹⁷ Mishnah Berurah ibid, Aruch Ha'shulchan ibid.

¹⁸ Da'as Torah 550, see Yechaveh Da'as 1:35, Avnei Yushfei 1:115. Refer to Ohr L'tzyion 3:25:7 who argues.

¹⁹ Eishel Avraham Butchatch 550:1, Orchos Chaim (Spinka) 550:4, Ohr L'tzyion 3:25:7.

²⁰ Shulchan Aruch 554:5, Aruch Ha'shulchan 7.

²¹ Refer to Besamim Rosh 91. Some say if a lady is able to still give birth even if she is not pregnant she does not have to fast (Derech Tzadikim 5:44:footnote 11:page 14, Tzvi L'tiferes 48, see Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:126). However, this is not to be relied upon *l'maseh* (Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah 3:page 30, Piskei Teshuvos 550:footnote 5). Some say women are weak so the *minhag* is that they do not fast (Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 401:footnote 16, Halichos U'minhagei Ben Hametzurim page 16:footnote 9).

²² Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 202, Aruch Ha'shulchan 550:1, Yeishiv Moshe pages 165-166, Ohr L'tzyion 3:25:footnote 7. The E'ven Yisroel 9:62:7 says a woman who is taking care of her children does not have to fast the three fasts, but this does not apply to *Tisha B'av* or *Yom Kippur*.

²³ Elya Rabbah 7, Biur Halacha "hakol," Chanoch L'nar 21:footnote 9, Birur Halacha 3:page 294, Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 398:3. Refer to Chuchmas Adom 152:17. This is even if they do not have the mature signs of a 12 year old for a girl and a 13 year old for a boy (Biur Halacha ibid, Be'er Moshe 8:96, Shevet Ha'Levi 6:122:2).

²⁴ Levush 550:1, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 550:1.

²⁵ Be'er Moshe 8:95, see Kaf Ha'chaim 554:23. It would seem that a canteen or soda machine may be opened in camp etc for those boys who are not fasting (Refer to Be'er Moshe ibid). The same applies to a store (Shevet Ha'kehusi 4:155:1).

²⁶ Chai Adom 133:6.

²⁷ Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 399:footnote 11. Refer to Chinuch Yisroel 1:page 230 (new), see ibid:pages 230-232 in depth.

²⁸ Refer to Magen Avraham 2, Chai Adom ibid, Mishnah Berurah 5, Aruch Ha'shulchan 9, Kaf Ha'chaim 8, Moadim V'zmanim 8:333.

²⁹ Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 398:footnote 10. Refer to Birchei Yosef 549:1.

³⁰ Mishnah Berurah 550:4, Aruch Ha'shulchan 550:6, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 4:123.

³¹ Nishmas Avraham 1:550:2, Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:4.

he does not feel well or the doctor told him to) should eat in a private manner since people do not know why he is eating and may think he is not careful with fasting.³²

When does the Fast Begin?

The fast begins seventy-two minutes before sunrise, at *alos hashachar*,³³ and the fast ends at *tzeis hachochavim*.³⁴ On a fast day, forty-five minutes after *shekia* is relied upon for the time of *tzeis hachochavim*.³⁵ One who is having trouble fasting may be lenient and start eating forty-one minutes after *shekia*.³⁶ Some *poskim* say one who normally holds that *tzeis hachochavim* is seventy-two minutes after *shekia* (like the opinion of *Rabbeinu Tam*), can still be lenient on a fast day, and break his fast after fifty minutes,³⁷ while others say that he should wait until seventy-two minutes.³⁸

One who is flying on a fast day and lands in a location where the fast is not yet over must wait until the fast ends at the place where he is now even though the fast already ended in the place of departure.³⁹ The same is true the opposite way.⁴⁰ Although others say in the first situation that no additional fasting is required and one can end his

fast as the time of the place of his departure;⁴¹ the *halacha* follows the first opinion.

Preparing for a Fast Day

Some say a *bal nefesh* should start fasting the night before the fast just as is done before *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*.⁴² However, the *minhag* is to be lenient.⁴³

One should drink plenty of liquids before a fast.⁴⁴ Before a fast one should avoid eating salty foods, and should make sure to eat starches because they make a person feel full for a long time.

Some say one should avoid eating too much food before a fast, because then the fast would not be felt since one is full from eating.⁴⁵

One is permitted to take caffeine suppositories before a fast to avoid getting caffeine related headaches during the fast.⁴⁶ Some *poskim* permit them to be taken on the fast day itself.⁴⁷

There used to be a custom that on the *Shabbos* before a fast day the *shamash* would announce in *shul* what day there will be a fast. This announcement was not made before *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*.⁴⁸ However, this custom is not practiced anymore.⁴⁹

Eating before the Fast

Before discussing the *halachos* of eating before a fast, it is important to review the *halachos* of eating before davening in general.

The prohibition of eating and drinking before *davening* starts from one half-hour before *alos*

³² Matei Ephraim 602:22, Sharei Ephraim 1:10, Minchas Elazar 3:3, Teshuvos V'hanugos 2:265, Minhag Yisroel Torah 550:page 31, Natei Gavriel (Bein Hametzurim) 1:page 64:footnote 22.

³³ Shulchan Aruch 564:1. Refer to Yisroel V'hazemanim 46:page 570.

³⁴ Mordechai Taanis 631, Shulchan Aruch 562:1.

³⁵ Refer to Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62.

³⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62, Modanei Yeshurin page 115:footnote 7. Some are of the opinion if a 13 year-old boy or a 12 year-old girl are having trouble fasting (not on *Tisha B'av* or *Yom Kippur*) they may break their fast a half-hour after *tzeis hachochavim* (Natei Gavriel Ben Hametzurim Teshuvos 2:pages 613-617).

³⁷ Shearim Metzuyanim B'halacha 123:4, Natei Gavriel (Ben Hametzurim) page 57.

³⁸ Yisroel V'hazemanim 1:pages 573-578, Natei Gavriel Ibid:page 58. Some say one can wait until 60 minutes after *shekia* if he can't hold out until seventy-two minutes (Divrei Yatziv 230).

³⁹ Igros Moshe O.C. 3:96, Modanei Yeshurin page 109, V'lechitcha B'derech page 59:1. Refer to Yisroel V'hazemanim 1:pages 578-580.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Shevet Ha'Levi 8:261:2. Refer to Teshuvos V'hanugos 4:122.

⁴² Refer to Shar Ha'tzyion 550:8-9.

⁴³ Mishnah Berurah 7.

⁴⁴ Natei Gavriel ibid 1:page 52.

⁴⁵ Elya Rabbah 563:1, Kaf Ha'chaim 549:11. Some say to avoid meat and wine before a fast (Kaf Ha'chaim 564:12).

⁴⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Derech Sicha page 380.

⁴⁷ Maharsham 1:123:page 178, Chelkes Yaakov 2:83, Contemporary Halakic Problems 2:page 26.

⁴⁸ Shulchan Aruch 550:4.

⁴⁹ Yufei Leleiv 2:550:4.

Halachically Speaking

hashachar.⁵⁰ Some are of the opinion that one should not eat from after *chatzos*⁵¹ (unless doing so is necessary for *tefilla*),⁵² although drinking is permitted until *alos hashachar*.⁵³ The *minhag* is that one may eat after *chatzos*.⁵⁴ One who wants to eat within the half-hour before *alos hashachar* should not eat more than a *k'beitzah* (less than 2.2 .o.z) of bread or *mezonos*. Eating fruit or drinking is permitted.⁵⁵ A woman may even eat bread or *mezonos* within the half-hour before *alos hashachar*.⁵⁶ Once *alos hashachar* arrives one may generally not eat, drink, or return to sleep until after *davening*.

Within these guidelines one is permitted to eat or drink the night before a fast (until *alos hashachar*) as long as he has not slept a *shenas keva*.⁵⁷ One who has slept a *shenas keva* may not eat or drink (even before the fast begins) unless he made a *t'nai* before going to sleep.⁵⁸ Some say this condition should be made verbally,⁵⁹ while others say it is sufficient if one thinks it in his head before going to sleep that he does not want the fast to start with his sleeping. The reason why a condition helps is because it is like saying that one is not yet accepting the fast upon himself.⁶⁰ Some say one does not need a condition to permit drinking since people usually

drink something upon awakening.⁶¹ According to this opinion one who would normally drink coffee would be permitted to have a coffee etc before a fast even without a condition.⁶² However, one who does not normally drink when awakening would require a condition before being permitted to drink.⁶³ *L'maseh*, one who is not used to drinking and did not make a condition that he wants to drink may still drink anyway.⁶⁴

It is very common for one to get up in the morning before a fast day and eat or drink something. However, the question arises how is it possible to go back to sleep since the time for *tefilla* starts from *alos hashachar*, one should be obligated to *daven shacharis* before returning to sleep because we are concerned he may sleep through the *zeman of shacharis*?

One who has a *shomer* to wake him up is permitted to go back to sleep before *davening*.⁶⁵ Some say an alarm clock is not considered a *shomer* since one usually shuts it off when it rings without getting out of bed.⁶⁶ However, one who normally gets out of bed when the alarm clock goes off may use it as a *shomer*.⁶⁷ Going back to sleep is permitted even without any *shomer* if one finishes eating (and goes back to sleep) before *alos hashachar* has arrived.⁶⁸

⁵⁰ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 89:5, Mishnah Berurah 27, Shar Ha'tzyion 33, Biur Halacha "vim," Ishei Yisroel 13:footnote 71, Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 162:4. If you started drinking or eating before or after this time, one must stop by *alos hashachar* (*poskim* *ibid*). Refer to Betzel Hachuchma 3:52 in regard to the morning of a fast day whether one must stop before the half hour prior to *alos hashachar*.

⁵¹ Magen Avraham 14 quoting a Zohar, see Yabea Omer O.C. 5:22:5.

⁵² Machtzis Ha'shekel 14, Kaf Ha'chaim 41, Mishnah Berurah 28.

⁵³ Be'er Heitiv 15, Mishnah Berurah *ibid*, Yalkut Yosef pages 147-148.

⁵⁴ Aruch Ha'shulchan 26, Heishiv Moshe 6, Yalkut Yosef *ibid*, Yabea Omer *ibid*, Minhag Yisroel Torah 1:page 131, Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 162:4.

⁵⁵ Refer to Mishnah Berurah 89:27, Teshuvos V'hanugos 2:254, 4:125, Piskei Teshuvos 564:1, Weekly Halacha Discussion page 419.

⁵⁶ Nishmas Avraham 1:page 55, Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 2:3:footnote 9.

⁵⁷ Mesechtas Taanis 12a, Tur 564, Shulchan Aruch 564:1.

⁵⁸ Tur *ibid*, Shulchan Aruch *ibid*.

⁵⁹ Teshuvos V'hanugos 4:125.

⁶⁰ G'ra, Mishnah Berurah 4.

⁶¹ Tur *ibid*, Rama 1, Elya Rabbah 2, Mishnah Berurah 5, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2. This is true even if one does not actually get up at this time every night (Piskei Teshuvos 564:footnote 12).

⁶² Some say one would only be allowed water, but this is not the case *l'maseh* (Refer to Be'er Heitiv 4, Kaf Ha'chaim 8).

⁶³ Rama 1, Magen Avraham 3, Be'er Heitiv 5. Many hold that a condition should initially be made before one wants to drink in the morning (Bais Yosef, Bach, Shulchan Aruch 564:1, Levush 1).

⁶⁴ Elya Rabbah 2, Mishnah Berurah 6, Shar Ha'tzyion 7, Kaf Ha'chaim 10.

⁶⁵ Binyan Olom 1:1, Mishnah Berurah 235:18. Refer to Divrei Yatziv 1:102 if a phone call to wake you up or to remind you to do a *mitzvah* a *shomer* suffices.

⁶⁶ Halichos Shlomo Tefilla 2:12, Shevus Yitzchok 2:page 287, see Chut Shuni Shabbos 1:page 215.

⁶⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Lekach Ha'kemach Hachodesh 89:66, Doleh U'mashka page 138.

⁶⁸ Refer to Dinim V'hanugos Chazzon Ish 4:13.

Enuyim

Some *poskim* say that just as one refrains from washing his body, doing *sicha*, and wearing shoes on *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*, a *bal nefesh* should do the same for other fast days.⁶⁹ However, many *poskim* maintain that even a *bal nefesh* does not have to do this on a regular fast day.⁷⁰

Fast Day Activities

One should be careful to control his anger on a fast day.⁷¹

One should not take brisk walks on a fast day because he will have to drink water.⁷²

Showering / Swimming

According to some *poskim* showering with hot water is permitted on a fast day (except for *Tisha B'av* and *Yom Kippur*), but one should only do so if he is very dirty or sweaty⁷³ and uncomfortable.⁷⁴ However, most *poskim* say that washing (showering) with hot water is forbidden.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, showering is permitted the night before a fast.⁷⁶ Even according to the more stringent

opinion, children may be lenient and take a shower.⁷⁷ According to all opinions washing ones face, hands and feet is permitted even with hot water.⁷⁸

Similarly while swimming is theoretically permitted on a fast day, the *poskim* say the *minhag* is that doing so is forbidden because it is done for enjoyment purposes.⁷⁹ The same is true for swimming in a river.⁸⁰ One can be lenient for children.⁸¹ Swimming is permitted the night before a fast.⁸² The reason is because swimming should really be permitted, but we are stringent, however we are not stringent the night before the fast.⁸³ Taking swimming lessons on a fast day is permitted.⁸⁴ Additionally, sunbathing is permitted on a fast day.⁸⁵

Music

Some *poskim* say that one is not allowed to listen to music on a fast day.⁸⁶

Haircuts

Some *poskim* say that haircuts are not permitted on a fast day,⁸⁷ while others say one can be lenient.⁸⁸ *L'maseh* one should avoid taking a haircut on a fast day.

Tasting food on a Fast Day

The opinion of the *Rama*⁸⁹ is that one is not allowed to place food in his mouth on a fast day even if he

⁶⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Magen Avraham 3, Be'er Heitiv 2, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 3, Eishel Avraham Butchatch, Chai Adom 133:7, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:8, Mishnah Berurah 6, Kaf Ha'chaim 10, Lekutei Maharich 3:page 583 (new), Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:2:footnote 8.

⁷⁰ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 550:2, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2, Maharshag 2:34:page 47, Kesav Sofer O.C. 100, Doleh U'mashka page 207. It is interesting to point out that the whole source for the stringency is a *Shlah* (Mesechtas Taanis page 90 new print) and if one looks at the *Shlah* he says one does not have to be *machmir* in the above, but if he does it is good for him. The *poskim* who quote the *Shlah* do not quote him to say this, rather they say he mentions a *bal nefesh* should be stringent.

⁷¹ Be'er Heitiv 568:22, Kaf Ha'chaim 549:11.

⁷² Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:footnote 18.

⁷³ Aruch Ha'shulchan 3.

⁷⁴ Diyunei Halachos pages 565-569.

⁷⁵ Tosfas Mesechtas Taanis 13a "v'chol," Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 1, Shar Ha'tzyion 8, Aruch Ha'shulchan 3, Modanei Yeshurin 1:page 108, see Levush 550:2, Elya Rabbah 2, Levushei Serad 3, Ateres Zekanim 550. If asara b'teves alls out on *Erev Shabbos* one is permitted to shower because of honor to *Shabbos* (Mishnah Berurah 550:6, Modanei Yeshurin 1:page 108).

⁷⁶ Kovetz Yemei Ben Hametzurim pages 91-92.

⁷⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

⁷⁸ Shar Ha'tzyion 8, Kaf Ha'chaim 13,

⁷⁹ Be'er Moshe 3:77, Rivevos Ephraim 1:363:1, 3:368. Refer to Biur Halacha 551:2 "m'rosh chodesh." See Da'as Torah 551:page 87 who says the Biur Halacha is a mistake in print (Refer to Shoneh Halachos 551:38).

⁸⁰ Be'er Moshe 3:77.

⁸¹ Natei Gavriel ibid:8:footnote 12.

⁸² Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Modanei Yeshurin 1:page 108.

⁸³ Modanei Yeshurin 1:page 108:footnote 27.

⁸⁴ Diyunei Halachos ibid.

⁸⁵ Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein z"l quoted in Modanei Yeshurin 1:page 108.

⁸⁶ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 122:1, Diyunei Halachos ibid, E'ven Yisroel 7:28:page 66. Refer to Avnei Yushfei 5:33:8.

⁸⁷ Turei E'ven Mesechtas Rosh Hashanah 18b, Shevet Ha'kehusi 1:181.

⁸⁸ Diyunei Halachos ibid, Chut Shuni Shabbos 4:page 381.

⁸⁹ 567:1.

will immediately spit it out. This is common when one is preparing food for after the fast and wants to taste it to see if it needs more spices.⁹⁰ The opinion

of the *Shulchan Aruch*⁹¹ is that tasting is permitted, but not on *Tisha B'av* or *Yom Kippur*. Some say only tasting less than a *reviis* is permitted at one time,⁹² while others say tasting even more than a *reviis* is permitted if one knows he will not swallow anything.⁹³ The reason why tasting is permitted is because it is not considered eating.⁹⁴ Some say according to the lenient view one would be able to taste a *reviis* each time he wants to taste a food.⁹⁵ *L'maseh* for *Ashkenazim* one may only taste food if it is being prepared for a *seudas mitzvah* after the fast, and even then one should only taste a little bit and then spit it out.⁹⁶ Others say the custom is that a woman who is cooking may taste the food to see if it needs more salt or spices as long as she immediately spits it out.⁹⁷

Washing one's Mouth

One who normally washes out his mouth with water in the morning⁹⁸ may do so on a fast day.⁹⁹ However, the *Mishnah Berurah*¹⁰⁰ says doing so is only permitted if one is in pain. This is true even on *Tisha B'av* if one is in a lot of pain, but on *Yom Kippur* it is forbidden.¹⁰¹ One who is washing out his mouth should be careful to bend his head forward to avoid swallowing any water.¹⁰² The *Aruch Ha'shulchan*¹⁰³ says one who normally gargles when washing his mouth may not do so on a

fast day, unless he stands straight up to make sure that no water gets in his throat.

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if one is allowed to use mouthwash on the morning of a fast day.

Some *poskim* are stringent,¹⁰⁴ while others say if one will have very bad breath then it is permitted.¹⁰⁵

It is very important to point out that many people are unaware that most mouthwashes are not kosher. The only mouthwash which is permitted to use without a *hechsher* is the brown (original flavor) Listerine®. The reason is because all mouthwashes contain glycerin which is the ingredient that gives the taste. Fifty-percent of all glycerin is not kosher and without a *hechsher* one cannot tell if the mouthwash contains kosher glycerin or not. The argument made by some that since one does not swallow mouthwash, placing it in the mouth should be permitted is questionable.¹⁰⁶ Taking Listerine pocket packs® (that have a *hechsher*) is not permitted on a fast day since one swallows the liquid which melts in the mouth. (All year-round a *shehakol* should be recited on them. Many people are un-aware of this and they should be told).¹⁰⁷

One is permitted to chew unflavored gum on a fast day.¹⁰⁸ However since such gum is not commonly sold today, chewing gum on a fast day is not permitted.¹⁰⁹

Dentist Appointment

One is permitted to go to a dentist on a fast day (even if he will swallow water) since it is for

⁹⁰ Magen Avraham 1, Elya Rabbah 1, Mishnah Berurah 1.

⁹¹ Ibid, Levush 1.

⁹² Shulchan Aruch ibid.

⁹³ Shulchan Aruch ibid.

⁹⁴ Magen Avraham 1, see Levush 1.

⁹⁵ Magen Avraham 5, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 4, Elya Rabbah 2. See Mishnah Berurah 8-9.

⁹⁶ Chai Adom 132:19, Mishnah Berurah 6, Kaf Ha'chaim 10.

⁹⁷ Aruch Ha'shulchan 2.

⁹⁸ Other liquids are forbidden if it is more than a *reviis* (Mishnah Berurah 12).

⁹⁹ Shulchan Aruch 567:3, Levush 2. Refer to Magen Avraham 7-8.

¹⁰⁰ 567:11. Also see Chai Adom 132:20.

¹⁰¹ Mishnah Berurah 11.

¹⁰² Mishnah Berurah 11, Aruch Ha'shulchan 3.

¹⁰³ 567:3.

¹⁰⁴ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Kinyan Torah 2:49:2, Modanei Yeshurin page 108, Chai Ha'Levi 5:48, Divrei Chachumim page 166:471 quoting the opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita. Some say if there is a need, brushing ones teeth is permitted (Divrei Chachumim Ibid).

¹⁰⁵ Be'er Moshe 8:94. Refer to Minchas Yitzchok 4:109.

¹⁰⁶ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

¹⁰⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

¹⁰⁸ Habayis Hayehudi 2:page 320:14.

¹⁰⁹ Yaskil Avdi 8:20:54, Miyum Ha'halacha 1:8. In regard to smoking on a fast day Refer to Be'er Heitiv 8, Sharei Teshuva 511:5, Yabea Omer O.C. 1:33, Yechaveh Da'as 5:39, Yalkut Yosef 5:page 535, Orchos Chaim (Spinka) 567:5.

refuah purposes.¹¹⁰ However, unless one is in real pain he should avoid going to a dentist on a fast day.¹¹¹

Swallowing Saliva

According to many *poskim* one is permitted to swallow his saliva on a fast day (even on *Yom Kippur*). The reason why it is permitted is because one does not have any intention for it to be food etc.¹¹² Although other *poskim* say one should spit it out if possible (especially on *Yom Kippur*),¹¹³ this is not the overwhelming custom. Some say if one ate food before a fast and the taste of the food is still in his mouth after the fast started then one should not swallow his saliva until the taste of the food has diminished.¹¹⁴

Taking Pills

On a fast day one who is not feeling well and wants to take a pill is permitted to do so. Some say one should wrap the pill in a tissue before swallowing it.¹¹⁵ Some *poskim* say that one may not use water to swallow a pill.¹¹⁶ (However, if one's doctor instructs him to take a pill on a fast day then even according to this opinion using a little water is permitted).¹¹⁷ Others say if one cannot take a pill without water then one may use a little water.¹¹⁸ One should avoid this if possible on *Tisha B'av*, and on *Yom Kippur* using water in order to swallow a pill is forbidden.¹¹⁹

Touching Food

There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether it is permitted to touch food on a fast day since one may come to eat the food. Giving a child food on a fast day is permitted.¹²⁰ On *Yom Kippur* one who is not feeding a child should refrain from touching food.¹²¹ The *minhag* is to be lenient in this regard on other fast days.¹²²

Recited a Beracha on Food

Some times it can happen that one forgets that it is a fast day and recites a *beracha* over a food or drink and before putting the food in his mouth realizes that it is a fast day. The question arises if it is better to eat a little bit to avoid an unnecessary *beracha* or should one just say *boruch shem*?

This question is a matter of dispute among many *poskim*; some say to eat a little bit¹²³ while others say to say *boruch shem*... and not eat or drink.¹²⁴ One who said *boruch ata Hashem* etc should end off with *lamdanei chukeicha*.¹²⁵ The reason for those who say to eat is because they hold a *beracha l'vatata* is a *d'oraisa* which is more important to avoid then not eating on a fast day which is *d'rabanan* in nature. Others say to say *boruch shem* because they hold saying a *beracha l'vatata* is *d'rabanan*.¹²⁶ *Horav Avrohom Pam zt"l*¹²⁷ said one can do whichever way one wants. However, as a matter of *halacha l'maseh* one should taste the food and then spit it out.¹²⁸

¹¹⁰ Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 398:foonnote 4. Others say one should not swallow the water (Miyum Ha'halacha 1:80).

¹¹¹ Refer to Weekly Halacha Discussion page 421.

¹¹² Magen Avraham 567:8, Eishel Avraham Butchatch, Mishnah Berurah 13, Aruch Ha'shulchan 9, Kaf Ha'chaim 20, Natei Gavriel (Ben Hametzurim) 1:page 55:footnote 9.

¹¹³ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 121:10, Matei Ephraim 612:7, Moadim V'zemanim 1:59. One who is swallowing saliva to make his fast easier should not do so on *Yom Kippur* (Ibid).

¹¹⁴ Elya Rabbah 567:6.

¹¹⁵ Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:footnote 8.

¹¹⁶ Nishmas Avraham 550:4.

¹¹⁷ Nishmas Avraham 5:page 46.

¹¹⁸ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Teshuvos V'hanugos 3:156.

¹¹⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Teshuvos V'hanugos 3:156.

¹²⁰ Shulchan Aruch 612:10, Ben Ish Chai Vayeilech 1:16, Shulchan Aruch Harav 611:9, Mishnah Berurah 32.

¹²¹ Matei Ephraim 612:10, Kaf Ha'chaim 55.

¹²² Pri Megadim M.Z, 612, see Da'as Torah 549:11 who is stringent.

¹²³ Birchos Habayis 19:5, Yabea Omer Y.D. 2:5, Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchoso 59:20.

¹²⁴ Sharei Teshuva 568:1, Yugel Yaakov 67, Sdei Chemed Baser B'chalav 12:page 290, Shevet Sofer O.C. 25, Da'as Torah 568, Kaf Ha'chaim 568:16, Birur Halacha 568, Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:329, Avnei Yushfei 3:30.

¹²⁵ Aruch Ha'shulchan 568:8.

¹²⁶ Mishnah Berurah 215:20.

¹²⁷ Heard from Horav Leibel Wulliger Shlita (Rosh Kollel Torah Vodas).

¹²⁸ Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:329,

Ate by Mistake

One who ate on a fast should still continue to fast.¹²⁹

Selected Halachos of Reciting Aneinu

The custom of the *Ashkenazim* is that *aneinu* is recited at *Mincha* on a fast day during the beracha of *sh'omea tefilla* (not for the *ba'al tefilla*).¹³⁰ On

the day of a fast some people write down in their *siddur* that they should recite *aneinu* today during the *shemonei esrei* of *mincha*.¹³¹ One who is not fasting does not recite *aneinu*.¹³² One who eats right before *mincha* should still recite *aneinu* at *mincha*¹³³ but he should say “ביום זה תעניתנו” instead of the regular *nusach*.¹³⁴ One who *davens* by himself also recites *aneinu*.¹³⁵

Mistakes in Aneinu

One who did not recite *aneinu* in *shom'ea tefilla* may still say it in any of the following cases:

- ♦ One who did not start *boruch ata...* of *shom'ea tefilla* may recite *aneinu* at that point.¹³⁶
- ♦ One who said *boruch ata* already may recite *aneinu* after the second *yehi ratzon* of *elokay netzor*.¹³⁷

♦ *B'dieved* if one did not move his feet when finishing *shemonei esrei* he may recite *aneinu* at that time.¹³⁸

♦ One who stepped back from *davening shemonei esrei* does not say *aneinu*.¹³⁹

One who said *ha'oneh be'es tzara* instead of ending off the *beracha* of *shom'ea tefilla* and realized his

mistake after *toch k'dei dibur* should recite the entire *shema koleinu* again.¹⁴⁰ If the mistake was realized before *toch k'dei dibur* one only needs to repeat the words of *shom'ea tefilla* (the last words of the *beracha*).¹⁴¹ If one already finished *shemonei esrei*, he must start again from the beginning of *shemonei esrei*.¹⁴²

Bal Koreh / Aliyah if not fasting

If there is no other person who can *lain* then one may ask a person who is not fasting to *lain*.¹⁴³ Others say he should not be a *ba'al koreh*.¹⁴⁴ It would seem that one who is not fasting may not receive an *aliyah* if it is not a day that *laining* is taking place anyways (Monday or Thursday).¹⁴⁵ According to all opinions if one who is not fasting was called up to the *Torah* he may still go for the *aliyah*.¹⁴⁶

¹²⁹ Mishnah Berurah 549:3.

¹³⁰ Shulchan Aruch 119:4, 566:1, Mishnah Berurah 557:3.

¹³¹ Mishnah Berurah 96:8.

¹³² Biur Halacha “ben,” Shevet Ha'Levi 5:60:4:page 61, Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 402:footnote 25.

¹³³ Mishnah Berurah 562:6-7, 568:3, Shevet Ha'Levi 5:60:4, see Shevet Ha'kehusi 1:180:1, Teshuvos V'hanhugos 1:328.

¹³⁴ Mishnah Berurah 562:25. Refer to Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:8 for a slightly different *nusach*.

¹³⁵ Rama 565:3, Mishnah Berurah 10. The same is true for reciting *oveinu malkeinu* (Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Modanei Yeshurin page 112:footnote 94).

¹³⁶ Shegias Mi Yoven 2:59.

¹³⁷ Refer to Shulchan Aruch 565:2, Pri Megadim M.Z. 566:2, Chai Adom 24:18, 29:5, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 19:14, Mishnah Berurah 6-7, Aruch Ha'shulchan 565:3, Kaf Ha'chaim 119:28, see Rivevos Ephraim 1:390, Birur Halacha 2:199:19, Shegias Mi Yoven 2:59:page 311:footnote 5 in depth if it should be said after the first *yehi ratzon* or after the second.

¹³⁸ Shar Ha'tzyion 6.

¹³⁹ Shulchan Aruch 565:2, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 19:14.

¹⁴⁰ Rivevos Ephraim 1:390, see Ishei Yisroel page 785:353.

¹⁴¹ Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Modanei Yeshurin page 111, Shevet Ha'Levi 8:132, Rivevos Ephraim 1:390, Ishei Yisroel 44:10.

¹⁴² Ishei Yisroel 44:10.

¹⁴³ Matei Ephraim 602:12, see Levushei Mordechai 2:23, Divrei Yatziv 2:247, Modanei Yeshurin page 113:footnote 111 quoting Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l.

¹⁴⁴ Refer to Piskei Teshuva 294:page 50, Be'er Moshe 3:29:1, Bais Avi 2:27, Piskei Teshuvos 294:page 50.

¹⁴⁵ Sharei Ephraim 1:10, Aruch Ha'shulchan 566:11, Rivevos Ephraim 3:338:2, see Aruch Ha'shulchan 135:14, Sharei Rachamim 8:24, Chai Ha'Levi 4:15:2. The Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:13:footnote 10 says if one ate a small shiur of food he may still receive an *aliyah* on a fast day.

¹⁴⁶ Mishnah Berurah 566:20.

Hagbah-Gelilah if not fasting

One who is not fasting may receive *hagbah* or *gelilah* on a fast day.¹⁴⁷

Pesukim by Aliyah

Both the *ba'al koreh*¹⁴⁸ and the one who got the *aliyah* should wait until after the *tzibur* finishes saying the *pesukim* before saying the *pesukim* themselves.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Sharei Ephraim 1:12, Matei Ephraim 602:15. The Aruch Ha'shulchan 135:14 is stringent.

¹⁴⁸ Some say the *ba'al koreh* does not recite the *pesukim* (Shevet Ha'kehusi 4:157).

¹⁴⁹ Sharei Ephraim 8:107, Mishnah Berurah 566:3.

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