

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) A fast for hours

R' Chisda asserts that a fast for hours is fulfilled only if he does not eat until the evening.

Abaye unsuccessfully challenges this ruling.

R' Chisda rules that any fast that is not observed until nightfall is not called a fast.

Three unsuccessful challenges are presented.

Shmuel states that a fast must be formally accepted the day preceding the fast.

Rabbah bar Shila, in response to the Gemara's inquiry indicates that fasting without a formal acceptance is meaningless.

Shmuel and Rav dispute whether the fast must be accepted during the afternoon or during the Mincha prayer.

R' Yosef suggests a proof to Shmuel's position which is rejected.

The Gemara further develops the dispute regarding the statement recorded in Megillas Ta'anis.

2) The night preceding the fast

A Baraisa records a dispute regarding when one has to stop eating and drinking.

Abaye qualifies this dispute to eating in the course of a meal but once the meal is completed it is prohibited to eat.

Rava unsuccessfully challenges this qualification.

A second version of this conversation is recorded in which the issue under discussion is that one may eat until dawn if he did not sleep but if he slept he may not eat.

This qualification is unsuccessfully challenged.

R' Ashi defines the halachic parameters of dozing.

3) Fast days

R' Kahana in the name of Rav rules that one who accepted upon himself a private fast should not wear leather shoes because he may have accepted a public fast upon himself. To avoid this doubt he should state explicitly that he is accepting a private fast.

An incident is recorded in which R' Sheishes indicates that public fast days must be observed stringently.

The Gemara records the practice of different Amoraim on public fast days.

Rav and Shmuel dispute whether a person can eat on the day he accepted upon himself to fast and pay back the fast on another day.

A second version of this conversation is recorded in which

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Distinctive INSIGHT

The definition of drowsiness—מתנמנם

אמר רבא לא שנו אלא כשלא ישן, אבל ישן אינו אוכל...ישן ועמד הרי זה אוכל—התם במתנמנם

A day fast begins with עלות השחר. Rava explains that the restriction to not eat only begins with the morning if a person has not gone to sleep. If one goes to sleep the night before a fast day, he has effectively accepted the fast at that point, and even if he gets up in the middle of the night he may not eat. The Gemara clarifies that if he becomes drowsy—מתנמנם, this is not considered falling asleep. The definition of drowsy in this context is when he is in a state of semi-sleep. He is alert enough that if we call to him, the person will answer, but he cannot answer rationally to a question we ask. If we remind him later, he will, however, recall that was spoken to him.

The wording of the Gemara in defining this term is “נימ” ולא נימ תיר ולא תיר”. Rashi explains that this is as a person is falling asleep. Tosafos, however, suggests that the double expression refers to one of two cases. One is when one is about to fall asleep. As he enters a state of sleep (נימ), he is not yet fast asleep (לא נימ). After sleeping, and one is waking up, there is a quasi-state of sleep. Here, the person is awake (תיר), but he is not fully awake (לא תיר). Yet, Tosafos notes that this explanation cannot be accurate, because we find a Gemara (Pesachim 120b) which discusses the law that a person cannot eat from the Korban Pesach in two locations. In fact, if one falls asleep, he cannot even finish eating in the same location either upon waking, because this is similar to his eating in two places. The Gemara then states that this is only a problem if he actually falls asleep, but becoming drowsy (מתנמנם) would not preclude his continuing to eat after being alerted. We see, says Tosafos, that מתנמנם cannot refer to a condition where one is waking, because if the person has already slept, that alone would result in his not being able to eat from the Korban due to the sleep he has experienced. Rather, concludes Tosafos, מתנמנם refers to a condition of falling asleep, as Rashi understood. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why is it necessary to formally accept a fast the day before?
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2. When, according to Rava, is the latest time to eat before a fast?
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3. Is it permissible to wear leather shoes on public fast days?
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4. What is the source that prohibits work on a fast day?
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HALACHAH Highlight

Fasting for a bad dream

ואמר רבה בר מחסטה אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב יפה תענית לחלום כאם לנעורת ואמר רב חסדא ובו ביום וא"ר יוסף ואפילו בשבת
And Rabbah bar Mechasya said in the name of R' Chama bar Gurya who said in the name of Rav a fast is helpful [to nullify the harmful message] of a dream as fire is [effective to burning] flax. And R' Chisda said [that it must be observed] that day and R' Yosef said [that it may be observed] even on Shabbos.

The Tur¹ cites opinions who assert that nowadays people should not fast on Shabbos if they experience a bad dream because we no longer know how to properly interpret dreams to know whether the dream portends good or bad things to come. Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi², the Shulchan Aruch HaRav, explains that this applies even to those dreams that were explained by Chazal. Just like medical treatments mentioned by Chazal are no longer practiced, so too their interpretation of dreams is no longer practiced. Therefore, one should not fast on Shabbos since we are uncertain whether the dream is truly bad. Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer³, the Kaf HaChaim, cites opinions who advise that rather than fasting on Shabbos fol-

lowing a bad dream one should refrain from talking with others and recite the entire book of Tehillim. On Sunday if they wish to fast they may fast and the appropriate tzedakah should be given at that time.

Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein⁴, the Aruch HaShulchan writes that if the person thought about matters related to the dream during the day or if the person went to sleep with a full stomach it is not categorized as a bad dream that requires fasting even during the week. He then notes that the custom in his time was for people who experienced a bad dream to consult with their rov, who would interpret it positively. Furthermore, Rav Chaim Chizkiyah Medini⁵, the S'dei Chemed, mentions in the opinion of some authorities that one who does not refrain from eating meat and drinking wine on days on which tachanun is recited should not be concerned about his dreams because they will not be of any significance. ■

1. טור או"ח סי' תקס"ח בשם ר' עמרם ור' קלונימוס
2. שו"ע הרב או"ח סי' רפ"ח סע' ז'
3. כף החיים שם ס"ק ס"ג בשם אגדת אליהו
4. ערוה"ש שם סע' י"ג
5. שדי חמד פאת השדה כללים מערכת ד' אות כ"ז בשם ליקוטי מהר"ן שפירא ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Like fire to flax

יפה תענית לחלום כאש לנעורת

A chossid once asked Rav Pinchas of Koretz, zt"l, "We find in the Sefer Chasidim that even though the Gemara in Taanis 12 tells us that fasting is good for destroying the bad parts of a dream like a fire destroys the bad parts of flax, it only refers to one who has repented. All the fasting in the world, however, will not avail for one who does not do teshuvah. The Sefer Chasidim goes on to tell of someone who had a bad dream on Shabbos and tried to ameliorate it by fasting that day and the next. Unfortunately, his dream came to be in all its detail because he failed to do teshuvah. My question is, if someone has a bad dream why not just concentrate on doing teshuvah instead of fasting, since this is the main objective of the fast anyway?"

The Rebbe answered, "Fasting is pref-

erable for a very simple reason. The more physical something is, the more we find of it in this world. For example, there is more inanimate matter in the world than animate life. Likewise, there are far more non-Jews than Jews in the world. Even within the Jewish people itself, there are more wicked people than righteous. And within the overwhelming majority of people, there are more bad or useless thoughts than good. Most people have a hard time focusing on any good thought for more than half an hour or so. This is especially true of someone whose day is almost entirely focused on mundane matters. To feel connected all the time to spirituality in such a situation is rare indeed! Anyone who fasts in order to come to teshuvah is involved in doing a mitzvah the entire day, and this is true even if he finds it difficult to focus on the teshuvah aspect of the fast throughout the day."

Rav Pinchas added, "Another reason why fasting is better is that it naturally subdues the physical. This is a great help for one who wishes to do teshuvah. One can

come to the highest levels while fasting. It is very rare that one who understands the purpose of the fast will fail to come to true teshuvah!" ■

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Shmuel supports Rav's lenient position of paying back a fast.

A related incident is recorded.

4) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah elaborates on the progression of fasts that are decreed in the event that rain continues to be withheld.

5) **The restriction against work during the second series of fasts**

The Gemara questions why, during the second series of fasts, there is a restriction against work.

R' Chisda in the name of R' Yirmiyah bar Abba answers that based on a pasuk a fast is similar to a Yom Tov and consequently, work is prohibited. This derivation is unsuccessfully challenged.

A detailed schedule of the events that take place on a fast is presented. ■