

# HALACHOS OF FASTING

RABBI TZVI YAAKOV STEIN

- There are four fasts instituted by Chazal in mourning the loss of the Beis Hamikdash. They are: the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the Ninth of Av, Tzom Gedaliah, and the Tenth of Teves. (Ta'anis Esther was instituted later for a different reason.)<sup>1</sup>
- The purpose of these fasts is to arouse one to teshuvah. Those that waste the day away because they are fasting are defeating the purpose of the fast.<sup>2</sup>
- The following halachos don't apply to Tisha Bav. Tisha Bav is stricter than the other fasts and those halachos appear on a different pdf.
- The fast begins at dawn (which most poskim say is 72 minutes before sunrise).<sup>3</sup>
- One should be very careful not to get angry on a fast day.<sup>4</sup>
- If one wants to eat before dawn, he should declare that he is not accepting the fast until it begins.<sup>5</sup> However, if one did not make this declaration, he may still drink before dawn, but he may not eat.<sup>6</sup>
- If one wishes to eat an egg sized amount of bread or cake, he must begin eating at least half an hour before dawn.<sup>7</sup>
- Women may begin eating the above even within half an hour of dawn.<sup>8</sup>
- If one feels uncomfortable from refraining from brushing his teeth or using mouthwash, he may do so, but must be wary not to swallow any of it.<sup>9</sup>
- Listerine strips are allowed to be used if one is very uncomfortable.
- Preferably one should not schedule a dentist visit for a fast day, unless necessary.
- Showering, listening to music, and shaving/taking haircuts are allowed<sup>10</sup> (excluding on 17 Tammuz and Tisha B'Av), but discouraged.<sup>11</sup>
- Scrupulous individuals don't shower the night before the fast.<sup>12</sup>
- Laundry and tailoring may be done on a fast day.<sup>13</sup>
- Nails may be cut.
- The custom is not to swim on a fast day. On the night before it is allowed.<sup>14</sup>
- Children may swim,<sup>15</sup> however, many have the custom not to allow them to.
- Medicines that don't taste good may be swallowed.<sup>16</sup>
- If liquids are necessary for the medications, they may be taken<sup>17</sup> with less than an ounce of water.<sup>18</sup>
- If one accidentally ate or drank he must continue to fast.<sup>19</sup>
- If one realizes that it is a fast day after having made a brachah over food, he should eat a minimal amount to avoid a brachah l'vatalah.<sup>20</sup>
- Pregnant and nursing women are not required to fast.<sup>21</sup>
- Some say that any mother within 24 months of childbirth, even if not nursing, need not fast.<sup>22</sup> A shailah should be asked.
- If one feels sick or faint, he must break his fast.<sup>23</sup>
- One who can't focus properly while at work should ask a shailah about fasting.<sup>24</sup>
- Children under the age of bar/bas mitzvah do not need to fast at all.<sup>25</sup>
- The fast ends at nightfall,<sup>26</sup> which is preferably fifty minutes after sunset, or, if necessary, 42 minutes after sunset.<sup>27</sup>
- Travelers conclude their fast when it ends at their current location.<sup>28</sup>
- Those that are fasting add the tefillah of Aneinu to the brachah of Shema Koleinu in Shemoneh Esrei<sup>29</sup> of Minchah<sup>30</sup>. If it was omitted, one need not repeat Shemoneh Esrei.<sup>31</sup>
- If Aneinu was forgotten in Shema Koleinu, it should be said before the last yihyu l'ratzon at the end of Shemoneh Esrei.<sup>32</sup>
- One who is not fasting should not serve as the chazzan<sup>33</sup> or receive an aliyah to the Torah.<sup>34</sup>
- Avinu Malkeinu is said at both Shacharis and Minchah.<sup>35</sup>
- One davening without a minyan should still say Avinu Malkeinu.
- Ma'ariv should preferably be davened before breaking one's fast.<sup>36</sup> If one has a set time and place to daven Ma'ariv, he may eat beforehand.

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| 20. שו"ת הלכות קטנות (חלק א סימן רנב)         | 2. משנה ברורה (סימן תקמט סעיף קטן א)        |
| 21. רמ"א (סימן תקנ סעיף א)                    | 3. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסד סעיף א)            |
| 22. דעת תורה (סימן תקנ סעיף א)                | 4. משנה ברורה (סימן תסח סעיף קטן ז)         |
| 23. משנה ברורה (סימן תקנ סעיף קטן ד)          | 5. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסד סעיף א)            |
| 24. שו"ת אגרות משה (אורח חיים חלק ד סימן קיד) | 6. רמ"א (סימן תקסד סעיף א)                  |
| 25. הליכות שלמה (פרק יג אות ג)                | 7. משנה ברורה (סימן פט סעיף קטן כז)         |
| 26. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסב סעיף א)             | 8. שושנת ישראל (פרק יז אות יב)              |
| 27. שו"ת אגרות משה (אורח חיים חלק ד סימן סב)  | 9. מנחת יצחק (סימן חלק ד סימן קט)           |
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| 29. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסה סעיף א)             | 11. משנה ברורה (סימן תקמט סעיף קטן ו)       |
| 30. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסה סעיף ג)             | 12. שער הציון (סימן תקנ סעיף קטן ט)         |
| 31. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסה סעיף ב)             | 13. חוט שני (שבת חלק ד עמוד שפא)            |
| 32. משנה ברורה סימן תקסה סעיף קטן ו           | 14. מועדי ישרון (חלק א עמ' 801)             |
| 33. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסו סעיף ה)             | 15. נטעי גבריא (פרק ח סעיף ו)               |
| 34. שולחן ערוך (סימן תקסו סעיף ו)             | 16. באר היטב (סימן תקסז סעיף קטן ז)         |
| 35. ערוך השלחן (סימן תקסו סעיף ח)             | 17. נשמת אברהם (חלק ה סימן תקנד סעיף קטן א) |
| 36. אליה רבה (סימן תרצב סעיף קטן יא)          | 18. נשמת אברהם (חלק ה סימן תריב סעיף קטן ב) |