



Laws & Customs: Asarah B'Teves

For the year 5785

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🕊️ WHO MUST FAST?

All must fast, including a *Chosson* and *Kallah*, and *Baalei Habris* (i.e. the *Mohel*, the *Sandek*, and the father of the baby).

One who inadvertently ate during the fast must immediately resume fasting.

Mothers who are pregnant or nursing, or have difficulty fasting while tending to their young children, should consult with a *Rov*. [One shouldn't be unduly strict in this regard, so as not to harm the wellbeing of mother and baby.] The ill/elderly should also consult with a *Rav*.

Anyone below *Bar/Bas Mitzvah* need not fast. From age nine upwards, the custom is to train children to fast for several hours, as per the child's abilities. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.]

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid meat, delicacies or excessive intake. Children old enough to understand the concept of a fast should avoid delicacies and meat.

🕊️ EATING PRIOR TO THE FAST

One may eat and drink the entire evening until dawn (4:13am), provided that either of these conditions are met:

- One didn't go to sleep for the night. [Dozing off is not regarded as such.]
- One stipulated (preferably verbally) before going to sleep that he will eat upon waking. In this case, one recites the morning *Brochos* before eating.

🕊️ LAWS OF FASTING

One shouldn't brush one's teeth or rinse one's mouth. [If this will cause great aggravation, there is room to be lenient, provided that one leans forward to prevent any liquid from flowing down one's throat; that one uses substances unfit for consumption (e.g. Listerine); and that one rinses with less than 86 ml.]

Non-chewable pills may be taken for medical purposes, without water. A *Rav* should be consulted about other medicines.

One may shower, bathe, apply ointments and creams, cut nails and hair. [Even those who choose to be strict on other fasts may be lenient on *Erev Shabbos*.]

When a *Bris* occurs on a fast, the *Seudah* takes place at night, after the fast.

One may touch food and engage in its preparation, but not taste it to determine whether it requires salt/spices. However,

when preparing food for *Shabbos*, one may taste the food if **necessary**, provided that **all** of these conditions are met:

- One expels it without swallowing.
- One tastes only an absolute minimum.
- One does not taste more than 86 ml in total throughout the day.

🕊️ CONDUCT ON A FAST DAY

One should learn *Torah* connected to the topic of the fast.

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *davening*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals – especially if one is exempt from fasting.

The purpose of fasting is to make a *Cheshbon Hanefesh* (soul reckoning) and do *Teshuvah*. Idling away one's time, or partaking in joyous or entertaining activities, is not in the spirit of the fast. One should be especially careful to avoid anger.

🕊️ SHACHARIS

During *Shacharis*, only the *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu*. Therefore, one who won't be fasting shouldn't serve as *Chazzan*.

[In the unlikely event that the *Chazzan* won't be fasting, or less than three congregants are fasting: Instead of reciting *Aneinu* between *Goel Yisroel* and *R'foeinu*, the *Chazzan* includes *Aneinu* in the *Brocho* of *Shema Koleinu*, and concludes the *Brocho* regularly; i.e. *Shomea Tefillah*.]

A *Chazzan* who forgot to recite *Aneinu*:

- if he remembered before reciting *Hashem's* name at the end of *R'foeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* immediately, and then repeats the *Brocho* of *R'foeinu*;
- if he already concluded the *Brocho* of *R'foeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* in the *Brocho* of *Shema Koleinu*, ending the *Brocho* with a double conclusion; i.e. *Ha'one B'eis Tzara V'shomea Tefillah*;
- if he already concluded the *Brocho* of *Shema Koleinu*, he recites *Aneinu* as a separate *Brocho* immediately after the *Brocho* of *Sim Shalom*.

It is customary to stand for the entire *Selichos*. [An infirm person may sit. If possible, he should at least stand for each recitation of the *Yud-Gimel Midos*.]

One who *davens* without a *Minyan* omits the *Yud-Gimel Midos-Harachamim*.

If *Tachnun* is not recited (e.g. a *Chosson* is present), *Selichos* is still recited, but *Avinu Malkeinu* is omitted.

One who is not fasting must still recite *Selichos* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.

🕊️ TORAH READING

The passage of *Vayechal* is read, provided that at least three congregants are fasting.

A non-fasting individual must still hear *Krias Hatorah* of *Vayechal*, but is not called up for an *Aliya*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and refusing the *Aliya* will pain him or minimize the honour of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliya*. In any case, he may perform *Hagbah* or *Gelilah*.

A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless no one else can.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The *Oileh* begins these verses with the congregation, but ends with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

🕊️ MINCHA

Mincha is longer than usual (due to *Krias Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); it should be timed to conclude before sunset (8:45pm). [This is especially pronounced on *Erev Shabbos*. Nevertheless, after the fact, *Mincha* may be davened until *Tzeis*.]

Ideally, *Krias Hatorah* shouldn't begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (2:05pm). *Shmoneh Esrei* may certainly not begin before then.

Hoidu and *Posach Eliyahu* is recited.

After *Haftorah*, the *Chazzan* slowly recites *Kaddish* while the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*, like *Mincha on Shabbos*.

An individual who forgot *Aneinu* may recite it in the passage *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If he didn't remember until he ended *Shmoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat it. [A non-fasting individual does not recite *Aneinu*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between *Goel Yisroel* and *R'foeinu*, and also recites *Birchas Kohanim* towards the end of *Shmoneh Esrei*. *Avinu Malkeinu* is omitted.

The Rebbe reinstated the custom of addressing the congregation after *Mincha* to arouse them to *Teshuvah*. This applies even when it is *Erev Shabbos*.

Maariv should be davened punctually, aiming to recite *Shema* just after *Tzeis*.

The fast concludes at *Tzeis* (9:16pm), and only after *Kiddush*. This applies even if one davened *Maariv* early, in which case he must also recite *Shema* before *Kiddush*.