

מסכת תענית · דף י"ב

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

In this daf, we are zocheh to delve into the halachos of how a fast day is established and the parameters of its sanctity. The Gemara begins by discussing a "fast of hours" (ta'anis sha'os), analyzing whether a person who only fasts for a portion of the day, or who decides to fast mid-day, has fulfilled a meaningful act of fasting. We also learn about the essential requirement of kabbalas ta'anis—taking the fast upon oneself in advance—and the precise time during the previous day's Mincha when this acceptance must be made.

Additionally, the Gemara explores the boundaries of eating before a fast begins. The Chachamim discuss the exact cutoff time on the night before a communal fast, debating whether one may eat until dawn (alos hashachar) or only until the crow of the rooster, and how this halacha changes if a person has already finished their meal and slept.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

STATEMENT

הא דאמר רב מתענין לשעות — והוא שלא טעם כלום עד הערב.

As for **that which you said**, that **one may fast for a few hours**, this is only **provided that he did not taste anything until the evening**.

OBJECTION

אמר ליה אבאי: הא תענית מעלייתא היא!

Abaye said to him, to Rav Chisda: But **this is a full-fledged fast**, since he does not eat the entire day!

ANSWER

לא צריכא — דאימלה אימלוכי.

Rav Chisda answered: **No, it is necessary** to state this halacha in a case **where he changed his mind**; he did not intend to fast in the morning, but halfway through the day he decided to fast for the remaining hours.

STATEMENT

ואמר רב חסדא: כל תענית שלא שקעה עליו חמה — לא שמייה תענית.

And Rav Chisda said: Any fast upon which the sun does not set, meaning if one eats before nightfall, is **not called a fast** at all.

QUESTION

מיתיבי: אנשי משמר מתעניין ולא משלימין!

The Gemara **raises an objection** from a Mishnah: **The members of the priestly watch fast** on communal fasts, **but they do not complete** the fast until nightfall! This implies that a partial-day fast is still called a fast.

ANSWER

הָתָם, לְצַעֲוֵרֵי נַפְשִׁיָּה בְּעָלְמָא הוּא.

The Gemara answers: **There, it is merely to cause themselves distress** in solidarity with the community, but it is not a halachically complete fast.

QUESTION

תָּא שְׁמַע, דְּאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַבִּי צְדוֹק: אֲנִי מִבְּנֵי בְנֵי שֵׁל סְנָאָה בֶּן בְּנִימִין, וּפְעַם אַחַת חָל תַּשְׁעָה בָּאָב לְהִיּוֹת בְּשַׁבָּת, וּדְחִינוּהוּ לְאַחַר הַשַּׁבָּת, וְהִתְעַנִּינוּ בּוֹ וְלֹא הִשְׁלַמְנוּהוּ — מִפְּנֵי שְׂיוֹם טוֹב שְׁלָנוּ הוּא.

Come and hear a proof, as Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Tzadok said: I am of the descendants of Senaah the son of Binyamin, and once the Ninth of Av occurred on Shabbos, and we postponed it until after Shabbos, and we fasted on it but we did not complete it, because it was our Yom Tov, a family holiday on the tenth of Av.

ANSWER

הָתָם נָמִי, לְצַעֲוֵרֵי נַפְשִׁיָּה בְּעָלְמָא הוּא.

The Gemara rejects this: **There too, it was merely to cause themselves distress**, not a formal fast.

QUESTION

תָּא שְׁמַע, דְּאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֵיחָא בְּתַעֲנִית עַד שְׁאָכּוּא לְבֵיתִי.

Come and hear another proof, as Rabbi Yochanan said: I shall be in a fast until I come to my house, which shows one can fast for just a few hours.

ANSWER

הָתָם, לְשִׁמוּטֵי נַפְשִׁיָּה מִכִּי נִשְׂיָאָה הוּא דְּעַבְדָּ.

The Gemara answers: **There, he did it only to excuse himself from the house of the Nasi**, so they would not pressure him to eat, but it was not a real fast.

STATEMENT

אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל: כָּל תַּעֲנִית שֶׁלֹּא קִיבֵּל עָלָיו מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם — לֹא שְׁמִיָּה תַעֲנִית.

Shmuel said: Any fast that one did not accept upon himself while it was still day on the preceding afternoon is not called a fast.

QUESTION

וְאִי יָתִיב, מַאי?

The Gemara asks: **And if he sat** and fasted anyway without accepting it beforehand, **what** is he considered?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר שֵׁילָא: דְּמִי לְמַפּוּחָא דְּמִלֵּיא זִיקָא.

Rabba bar Sheila said: He is likened to a bellows that is full of air, which has no substance; his fasting has no halachic value.

QUESTION

אימת מקביל ליה?

The Gemara asks: **When does one accept it** upon himself?

ANSWER

רב אמר: במנחה, ושמואל אמר: בתפלת המנחה.

Rav said: During the time of Minchah, from midday onwards. And Shmuel said: During the Minchah prayer itself.

STATEMENT

אמר רב יוסה: כוותיה דשמואל מסתברא, דכתיב במגילת תענית: להן, כל איניש דייתי עלוהי מקדמת דנא — ייסר.

Rav Yosef said: It stands to reason that the halacha is like Shmuel, as it is written in Megillat Taanit: Therefore, any person upon whom a fast comes from before this, he shall bind himself.

QUESTION

מאי לאו — ייסר עצמו בצלו?

Is it not that this means he shall bind himself in his prayer, which supports Shmuel?

ANSWER

לא — יאסר עצמו.

The Gemara answers: No, the word should be read as he shall render himself prohibited from eating on those festive days.

STATEMENT

פליגי בה רבי חייא ורבי שמעון ברבי.

The Gemara notes: Rabbi Chiyya and Rabbi Shimon the son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi disagree about this reading.

STATEMENT

חד אמר: ייסר, וחד אמר: יאסר.

One said the text reads 'yeisar', and one said it reads 'ye'aser'.

QUESTION

מאן דאמר ייסר — כדאמרין. למאן דאמר יאסר — מאי היא?

The one who said 'yeisar' is explained as we just said. But according to the one who said 'ye'aser', what is the meaning of this ruling?

EXPLANATION

דתנא במגילת תענית: כל איניש דייתי עלוהי מקדמת דנא יאסר. כיצד? יחיד שקיבל עליו שני וחמישי ושני של כל השנה כולה, ואירעו בם ימים טובים הכתובין במגילת תענית, אם נדרו קודם לגזרתנו — יבטיל נדרו את גזרתנו, ואם גזרתנו קודמת לנדרו — תבטל גזרתנו את נדרו.

As it is taught in Megillat Taanit: Any person upon whom a fast comes from before this, he shall be prohibited from eating. How so? An individual who accepted upon himself to fast on Mondays and Thursdays and Mondays of the entire year, and holidays written in Megillat Taanit occurred on them; if his vow preceded our decree, his vow annuls our decree and he must fast, but if our decree preceded his vow, our decree annuls his vow and he may not fast.

BRAISA

תָּנּוּ רַבָּנָן: עַד מָתִי אוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתָהּ — עַד שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה עֲמוּד הַשָּׁחַר, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמֵר: עַד קְרוֹת הַגָּבֶר.

The Rabbis taught in a baraisa: Until when may one eat and drink on the night before a fast? Until dawn rises; these are the words of Rabbi. Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon says: Until the call of the rooster, which is earlier.

STATEMENT

אָמַר אַבָּי: לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא שֶׁלֹּא גָמַר סְעוּדָתוֹ, אֲבָל גָּמַר סְעוּדָתוֹ — אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל.

Abaye said: They only taught this where he had not finished his meal, but if he finished his meal, he may not eat any further.

OBJECTION

אֵיתִיבִיהּ רַבָּא: גָּמַר וְעָמַד — הֲרִי זֶה אוֹכֵל!

Rava raised an objection to him from a baraisa: If he finished his meal and stood up, he may still eat!

ANSWER

הָתָם כְּשֶׁלֹּא סִילֵק.

Abaye answered: There it is a case where he had not yet cleared the table, so the meal is not considered fully finished.

STATEMENT

אִיכָּא דְאָמְרִי, אָמַר רַבָּא: לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא כְּשֶׁלֹּא יָשָׁן, אֲבָל יָשָׁן — אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל.

Some say a different version: Rava said: They only taught this where he did not sleep, but if he slept, he may not eat.

OBJECTION

אֵיתִיבִיהּ אַבָּי: יָשָׁן וְעָמַד — הֲרִי זֶה אוֹכֵל!

Abaye raised an objection to him: If he slept and arose, he may still eat!

ANSWER

הָתָם כְּמִתְנַמְנָם.

Rava answered: There it refers to one who was merely dozing.

QUESTION

הֵיכִי דְמִי מִתְנַמְנָם?

The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of dozing?

ANSWER

אמר רב אשי: נים ולא נים, תיר ולא תיר. דקרו ליה ועני, ולא ידע אהדורי סבא, וכי מדברי ליה מדבר.

Rav Ashi said: He is asleep but not asleep, awake but not awake. If they call him he answers, but he does not know how to give a reasoned reply, and when they remind him of something, he remembers.

STATEMENT

אמר רב כהנא אמר רב: יחיד שקיפל עליו תענית — אסור בנעילת הסנדל. חיישינן שמא תענית צבור קיפל עליו.

Rav Kahana said in the name of Rav: An individual who accepted upon himself a fast is forbidden in the wearing of shoes. We concern ourselves lest he accepted upon himself a public fast, which has stricter rules.

QUESTION

היכי ליעבד?

The Gemara asks: **What should he do** to avoid this restriction?

ANSWER

אמר רבה בר רב שילא, לימא הכי: למחר אהא לפניך בתענית יחיד.

Rabba bar Rav Sheila said: Let him say this when accepting the fast: 'Tomorrow I shall be before You in an individual fast.'

OBJECTION

אמרו ליה רבנן לרב ששת: הא קא חזינן רבנן דמסיימי מסנייהו ואתו לבי תעניתא!

The Rabbis said to Rav Sheshet: But we see Rabbis who wear their shoes and come to the house of the fast!

ANSWER

איקפד ואמר להו: דלמא מיכל נמי אכול.

He became angry and said to them: Perhaps they also ate, meaning they do not hold of these restrictions at all!

STATEMENT

אביי ורבא (מעילי כי מ) סיימי אפנתא.

The Gemara relates: Abaye and Rava would wear soft leather slippers on a fast day.

STATEMENT

מרימר ומר זוטרא מחלפי דנמינא לשמאלא ודשמאלא לימינא.

Marimar and Mar Zutra would switch their shoes, putting the right shoe on the left foot and the left shoe on the right foot, to feel discomfort.

STATEMENT

רבנן דבי רב אשי נפקי כי אורחיהו, סברי כי הא דאמר שמואל: אין תענית צבור בבבלי אלא תשעה באב בלבד.

The Rabbis of the house of Rav Ashi went out in their usual way with regular shoes; they held like that which Shmuel said: There is no public fast in Babylonia with all these restrictions except for the Ninth of Av alone.

STATEMENT

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לזה אדם תעניתו ופוצע.

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: A person may borrow his fast and repay it on another day if he needs to eat.

STATEMENT

כי אמריתה קמיה דשמואל, אמר לי: וכי נדר קביל עליה, דלא סגי דלא משלם? לצעורי נפשיה קביל עליה. אי מצי — מצער נפשיה, אי לא מצי — לא מצער נפשיה.

Rav Yehuda said: When I said this before Shmuel, he said to me: Did he accept a vow upon himself, that it is not enough unless he pays it back? He accepted upon himself to distress himself; if he is able, he distresses himself, and if he is not able, he does not distress himself and does not need to repay it.

STATEMENT

איכא דאמרי, אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לזה אדם תעניתו ופוצע. כי אמריתה קמיה דשמואל, אמר לי: פשיטא! לא יהא אלא נדר. נדר — מי לא מצי בעי לשלומי ומינל למחר וליומא אחרנא.

Some say a different version: Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: A person may borrow his fast and repay it. When I said this before Shmuel, he said to me: It is obvious! Even if it were nothing but a vow, can he not pay it back and go tomorrow or another day?

STATEMENT

רב יהושע בריה דרב אידי איקלע לבי רב אסי. עבדו ליה עגלא תילתא, אמרו ליה: ליטעום מר מידי. אמר להו: בתעניתא יתיבנא.

Rav Yehoshua the son of Rav Iddi happened to come to the house of Rav Assi. They prepared for him a third-born calf, and they said to him: Let the master taste something. He said to them: I am sitting in a fast.

OBJECTION

אמרו ליה: ולו זיה מר וליפרע, לא סבר מר להא דאמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לזה אדם תעניתו ופוצע?

They said to him: Let the master borrow his fast and repay it later. Does the master not hold of that which Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: A person may borrow his fast and repay it?

ANSWER

אמר להו: תענית חלום הוא.

He said to them: It is a fast for a bad dream, which must be fasted on that very day.

STATEMENT

ואמר רבה בר מחסיה אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: יפה תענית לחלום כאש לנעורת.

For Rabba bar Machseya said in the name of Rav Chama bar Guryah in the name of Rav: A fast is as beneficial for a bad dream as fire is to flax.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חסדא: ובו כיום.

Rav Chisda said: And only if he fasts on that very day.

STATEMENT

ואמר רב יוסף: ואפילו בשבת.

And Rav Yosef said: And even on Shabbos one may fast for a bad dream.

STATEMENT

מאי תקנתיה? ליתבי תעניתא לתעניתא.

What is his remedy for fasting on Shabbos? Let him sit in another fast on a weekday for having fasted on the fast of Shabbos.

MISHNAH מִשְׁנָה

MISHNAH

עברו אלו ולא נענו — בית דין גוזרין שלש תעניות אחרות על הצבור. אוכלין ושותין מבעוד יום, ואסורין במלאכה וברחיצה ובסיכה ובנעילת הסנדל ובתשמיש המטה, ונועלין את המרחצאות.

If these three fasts passed and they were not answered, the Beit Din decrees three other fasts upon the community. They may eat and drink only while it is still day on the eve of the fast, and they are forbidden in work, and in washing, and in anointing, and in wearing shoes, and in marital relations, and they lock the bathhouses.

MISHNAH

עברו אלו ולא נענו, בית דין גוזרין עליהן עוד שבע שנה עשרה תעניות על הצבור.

If these passed and they were not answered, the Beit Din decrees upon them another seven, which are thirteen fasts in total upon the community.

MISHNAH

הרי אלו יתרות על הראשונות, שבאלו מתריעין, ונועלין את החנויות. בשני מטין עם חשיכה, ובחמישי מותרין מפני כבוד השבת.

These last seven are more stringent than the first ones, for on these we sound the shofar, and we lock the shops. On Monday they open slightly at nightfall, and on Thursday they are permitted to open due to the honor of Shabbos.

MISHNAH

עברו אלו ולא נענו, ממעטין במשא ומתן, בבנין ובנטיעה, באירוסין ובנישואין, ובשאילת שלום בין אדם לחבירו — כבני אדם הנזופין למקום.

If these passed and they were not answered, we decrease business, building and planting, betrothals and marriages, and greeting one another, like people who are rebuked by the Omnipresent.

MISHNAH

הַיְחִידִים חוֹזְרִין וּמִתְעַנִּין עַד שֶׁיֵּצֵא נִסָּן. יֵצֵא נִסָּן וְיָרְדוּ גְשָׁמִים — סִימָן קָלָהּ, שְׁנֵאֹמֶר: "הֲלוֹא קָצִיר חֲטִים הַיּוֹם וְגו'".

The individuals return and fast until Nissan ends. If Nissan ended and rain fell, it is a sign of a curse, as it is said: 'Is it not wheat harvest today...'

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

QUESTION

בְּשִׁלְמָא כּוּלְהוּ, אֵית בְּהוּ תַעֲנוּג: רְחִיצָה וְסִיכָה וְתַשְׁמִישׁ הַמָּטָה, אֲכָל מְלָאכָה — צַעַר הוּא!

The Gemara asks: **Granted** all of them, there is pleasure in them: washing, anointing, and marital relations; but work is a **pain**, so why is it forbidden?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַב חֲסִידָא אָמַר רַב יִרְמְיָה בַּר אֲבָא, אָמַר קָרָא: "קִדְּשׁוּ צוּם קְרָאוּ עֲצָרָה אֲסָפוּ זְקֵנִים", בְּעֲצָרָתָּהּ, מָה עֲצָרָתָּה אֲסוּר בְּעֲשִׂיַּת מְלָאכָה — אִף תַּעֲנִית אֲסוּר בְּעֲשִׂיַּת מְלָאכָה.

Rav Chisda said in the name of Rav Yirmeyah bar Abba: The verse says: 'Sanctify a fast, call an assembly, gather the elders.' This compares a fast to an assembly; just as an assembly is forbidden in doing work, so too a fast is forbidden in doing work.

QUESTION

אִי, מָה עֲצָרָתָּה מְאוּרְתָא — אִף תַּעֲנִית נְמִי מְאוּרְתָא!

The Gemara asks: If so, just as an assembly begins from the evening, so too a fast should also forbid work from the evening!

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: לְדִידִי מִפְּרָשָׁא לִי מִיְנֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי יִרְמְיָה בַּר אֲבָא. אָמַר קָרָא: "אֲסָפוּ זְקֵנִים", דּוּמִיָּא דְּאַסִּיפַת זְקֵנִים, מָה אֲסִיפַת זְקֵנִים בַּיּוֹם — אִף צוּם נְמִי בַּיּוֹם.

Rabbi Zeira said: To me it was explained by Rabbi Yirmeyah bar Abba himself: The verse says: 'Gather the elders.' This compares the fast to the gathering of the elders; just as the gathering of the elders is by day, so too the fast's restrictions are by day.

QUESTION

וְאִימָא מְטִיהָרָא?

The Gemara asks: **But say** it should only begin from midday when the elders gather?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַב שִׁישָׁא בְּרִיהּ דְּרַב אִידִי: מְסִיעֵ לֵיהּ לָרֵב הוּנָא, דְּאָמַר: מִצְּפָרָא כִּינוּפָּרָא.

Rav Shisha the son of Rav Iddi said: This supports Rav Huna, who said: From the morning is the gathering, so the fast begins in the morning.

EXPLANATION

הִיכִי עֲבָדִי? אָמַר אֲבִי: מִצְפָּרָא עַד פְּלָגָא דִּיּוֹמָא מְעִינִינן בְּמִילֵי דְמָתָא. מִכָּאן וְאִילָּהּ, רַבְעָא דִּיּוֹמָא קָרִינוּ בְּסִפְרָא וְאַפְטָרָתָא, מִכָּאן וְאִילָּהּ בְּעִינוּ רַחֲמֵי, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "וַיִּקְוֹמוּ עַל עֶמְדָּם וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסִפְרֵי תוֹרַת ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם רַבְעִית הַיּוֹם וּרְבַעִית מִתּוֹדִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לַה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם."

The Gemara asks: How do they do this? Abaye said: From the morning until midday we examine the matters of the city. From then on, a quarter of the day we read in the Torah and the Haftarah. From then on, we seek mercy, as it is said: 'And they stood up in their place and read in the book of the Torah of Hashem their G-d for a quarter of the day, and a quarter they confessed and prostrated themselves before Hashem their G-d.'

SUMMARY

The sugya clarifies that for a fast to be halachically recognized, it must generally be accepted the afternoon before during Mincha, as Shmuel rules, and must continue until sunset. While certain groups, like the priestly watch (anshei mishmar) or the family of Rabbi Tzadok, did not complete their fasts, the Gemara explains this was merely to participate in the community's distress rather than a formal fast. Finally, the Gemara establishes that on a communal fast where eating is permitted the night before, one may eat until dawn, provided they did not go to sleep with the intention of finishing their meal.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Gemara teaches us a profound lesson about the power of our thoughts and intentions. Shmuel says that a fast which a person did not accept upon himself the day before is not called a fast at all; rather, that person is compared to a bellows filled only with air. Without the conscious, holy intention of a kabbalah—a formal acceptance—the physical act of refraining from food is just empty wind. It lacks the soul of the avodah.

This is a powerful guide for our daily lives. How often do we go through our day performing mitzvos, helping others, or even holding back our anger, but we do it simply by default or because we were caught up in the moment? The Torah is teaching us that the difference between a hollow, empty action and a deeply spiritual, transformative act of avodah is the preparation of our mind. When we take a moment beforehand to consciously dedicate our actions to Hashem, we elevate a simple physical event into something eternal.

Before you perform any mitzva or act of chesed today, pause for three seconds to consciously think: "I am doing this now to bring nachas ruach to Hashem."