

# שפה ברורה

*The Halachos of  
Asara B'Teves*



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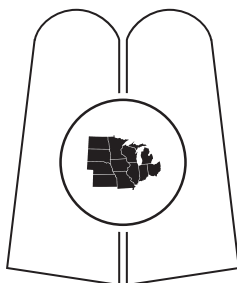
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שפה ברורה

הלכות עשרה בטבת

THE HALACHOS OF  
ASARA B'TEVES



AGUDATH ISRAEL OF ILLINOIS

A project of  
MIDWEST AGUDAS YISROEL  
COUNCIL OF SYNAGOGUE RABBONIM

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# THE HALACHOS OF ASARA B'TEVES

THESE HALACHOS ONLY APPLY TO ASARA B'TEVES. THE HALACHOS OF THE OTHER FAST DAYS, PARTICULARLY YOM KIPPUR AND TISHA B'AV, VARY FROM WHAT IS WRITTEN ON THESE PAGES

## I. Background

- A. Reason for the Fast** - Asara B'Teves (the 10<sup>th</sup> of Teves) is a fast day that was established to commemorate Nevuchadnezar's siege of Yerushalayim that ultimately led to the *churban Beis Hamikdash*.
- B. Purpose of the Fast** - In addition to the inherent value of fasting as a form of *teshuva*, the primary purpose of the day is to utilize it as time for *davening* and introspection. In the words of the Mishna Berura, one who does not use his time for this purpose has missed the point of the fast day.

## II. Who Needs to Fast

- A. Adults** - All men and women above the age of *bar* and *bas mitzvah* have an obligation to fast on Asara B'Teves.
- B. Children** - Children, even those who have reached the age of *chinuch*, have no obligation to fast on Asara B'Teves. Older children who are still under the age of *bar* and *bas mitzvah* should be instructed to eat more simple foods and to avoid treats.

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## C. Exceptions-

### 1. IMPORTANT NOTES -

- a. This section is only intended to provide general guidelines for who may be exempt from fasting. Each individual *shaila* should be presented to a Rav.
- b. One's health is of primary concern. If an individual receives a psak that he does not have to fast because of medical reasons, he specifically should not fast. There is no benefit of pushing himself to fast anyways.

### 2. Sick and Elderly -

#### a. Sick -

- i. If one falls into the category of being a *choleh she'ain bo sakana*, he should not fast on Asara B'Teves. Therefore, if one is not feeling well on or before the *taanis*, he should discuss with his Rav if he falls into this category. Normal weakness from fasting does not count as being a *choleh*.
- ii. If one is not currently sick, but may become sick by fasting, he should discuss his situation with a Rav. Depending on the details, he may not be obligated to fast at all or he may be instructed to avoid breaking his fast completely by only eating small amounts divided by intervals of time (*pachos pachos mi'kishiur*- less than an ounce per every 4 minutes).
- iii. An individual who only needs to drink to maintain his health, but it is not necessary for him to eat, should only drink and not eat on the *taanis*.

- b. **Elderly** - An elderly person whose doctor is of the opinion that fasting will be detrimental to his health, should not fast on Asara B'Teves.

### 3. Pregnant and Nursing -

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- a. **Pregnant** - A pregnant woman should discuss with her Rav if she is obligated to fast on Asara B'Teves. The *psak* will depend on what stage of pregnancy she is in, how she is currently feeling and how well she normally fasts.
- b. **Postpartum and Nursing** -
  - i. **Postpartum** - A woman within thirty days of giving birth is exempt from fasting on Asara B'Teves.
  - ii. **Nursing** - If it is after 30 days from giving birth and the mother is nursing, then she has the same status as a pregnant woman. If she is healthy, but she is concerned that if she fasts she will not have enough milk for the baby, she does not need to fast.

## D. Halachos for Individuals not Fasting -

1. **Food Selection** - An individual not fasting on Asara B'Teves should try to limit his diet to simple foods.
2. **Delaying Eating** - Once an individual has been given a *heter* not to fast, he may eat immediately at the beginning of the fast. He does not need to delay eating until later.
3. **Location** - When possible, individuals who will be eating on the fast day should try to eat in private.

## III. Additional Halachos of Fasting

### A. Rinsing and Mouthwash -

1. **Mouth Rinsing and Mouthwash** - One should not rinse his mouth on Asara B'Teves. If one is very uncomfortable,

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he may rinse out his mouth with a small amount of water while leaning over the sink. This will help avoid accidentally swallowing some of the water.

2. **Brushing Teeth** - One should not brush his teeth on Asara B'Teves unless he is very uncomfortable. If one does feel a need to brush his teeth on Asara B'Teves, he should still try to avoid rinsing afterwards with water. But even this is allowed when necessary.

## B. Medicine -

1. **Taking Medicine** - An individual who is well enough to fast, but he needs to take certain medications, may ingest any tasteless medicine (liquid, tablet, etc.) on Asara B'Teves. One should consult with a Rav about flavored medicine.
2. **Using Water** - One should ideally swallow the pills without the use of water. If, however, this is too difficult, then a small amount of water (up to one ounce) may be used.

**C. Tasting Food** - One should not taste food while cooking, even if it will be spit out afterwards.

**D. Accidentally Ate** - One who accidentally ate something on Asara B'Teves should stop immediately and still finish the fast. See below (section VII(A)(1)(d)) for how this person should modify his *tefilla* of Aneinu.

**E. Accidentally Made a Bracha** - If one accidentally made a *bracha* on a food or drink on Asara B'Teves, there is a debate in halacha what is the proper course of action. Some poskim are of the opinion that he should take a small bite of the food or sip of the drink to avoid it being a *bracha l'vatola*. Others pasken that he should not eat or drink anything, and he should just allow the *bracha* to become *l'vatola* inactively (*sheiv v'al taaseh*).



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## IV. Time of the Fast

- A. Beginning of the Fast** - Other than Yom Kippur and Tisha B'av, all fast days start at *alos hashachar* (dawn) in the morning. There is a significant debate, however, how to calculate *alos*. Some poskim are of the opinion that *alos* is always 72 minutes before sunrise, others argue that *alos* is when the sun is 16.1 degrees below the horizon (which in the Summer can be much more than 72 minutes). One should follow the guidance of his Rav on this matter.
- B. End of the Fast** - The fast ends at *tzeis hakochavim*. There are various *minhagim* as to how long after *shkiah* (sunset) this is. One should ideally wait until 50 minutes after *shkiah* to eat. One may rely on this time, even if one normally waits 72 minutes for the end of Shabbos. In a case of need, one may be able to break the fast a bit earlier. A Rav should be consulted.
- C. Travelling** - The beginning and end of the fast are established by the location that one is currently in, and not on how many hours that he actually fasted. Therefore-
1. Travelling East- If one travels east during a Taanis, his fast will be shorter.
  2. Travelling West- If one travels west during a Taanis, his fast will be longer.
  3. International Dateline- If one will be crossing the international dateline during a fast day, a Rav should be consulted.

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## V. Eating Before the Fast

**A. Background and Practical Halacha** - Going to sleep the night before a fast day may count as the formal acceptance of the fast. Therefore, if one would like to wake up early to eat before the fast, he should specifically make this stipulation in his mind that he plans to wake up to eat. If he intended to wake up before the fast but either did not know that he needed to make a stipulation or he forgot to make one, he may still eat before the fast. If he had no intention to wake up early and he happened to wake up in the middle of the night, he should not eat anything at that point.

### **B. When Does Eating Need to Stop -**

1. Eating a *k'beitzah* (2.2 oz or more) of bread or *pas haba'ah b'kisnin* (bread-like *mezonos* items)- He must stop eating at least 30 minutes before *alos hashachar* (dawn).
2. Eating less than a *k'beitzah* of the above items or other food items of any amount- These items may be eaten until *alos*.

**C. Slow Release Pills** - Some individuals take slow release pain relief medication or caffeine pills before the fast to make the fast easier. If one will find it difficult to fast without taking such pills, it is permissible.

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## VI. Additional Restrictions

**A. Background** - There is considerable debate if there are any additional restrictions on Asara B'Teves and other fast days. Unless it is a case of need, where a *shaila* should be asked, one practical approach is as follows-

**B. Should Ideally be Avoided** - The following activities should ideally be avoided on a fast day:

1. Showering- One should ideally not take a hot shower on a fast day starting at *alos*.
  - a. Washing one's hands and face with hot water are permitted.
  - b. A child may take a hot shower or a bath on a fast day.
  - c. One who swims regularly should ask a *shaila* if he can swim on a fast day.
2. Listening to music

**C. Permissible** - All opinions agree that the following activities are completely permissible on a fast day:

1. Wearing leather shoes
2. Using deodorant and lotions
3. Doing laundry and wearing freshly laundered clothes.
4. Saying the bracha of "She'hechyanu".

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## VII. Hilchos Tefilla and Krias Hatorah

**A. Aneinu** - The tefilla “Aneinu” is added into the *bracha* of Shema Koleinu during Mincha on fast days. At Shacharis and Mincha the *shaliach tzibbur* adds Aneinu into *chazaras hashatz* between the *berachos* of “Geulah” and “Refuah”.

1. Who says Aneinu?
  - a. Only individuals who are fasting should say Aneinu.
  - b. One who is still fasting but plans on breaking the fast after Mincha, should still say Aneinu.
  - c. One who only ate *pachos pachos mi'kishiur* (small amounts with intervals) or a little water with medicine may still say Aneinu.
  - d. One who accidentally broke the fast and then remembered and finished the rest of the fast, may still say Aneinu but should replace the words “*b'yom tzom taaniseinu* (our fast)” with “*b'yom tzom ha'taanis hazeh*”.
2. If one forgot to say Aneinu and he already finished Shema Koleinu, he should add it in before the “Yehi L'ratzon” at the end of Shemoneh Esrei. If one forgot to say it altogether, he does not need to repeat Shemoneh Esrei.

**B. Selichos** - Selichos are recited on fast days after the *chazzan's* repetition of Shemoneh Esrei during Shacharis.

1. Everyone should say Selichos on a fast day, whether or not they are fasting.
2. An individual who is saying Selichos on his own without a *minyán* may not recite the “Yud Gimmel Middos” normally. They can only be said “*derech kriah*.” Meaning, it should be read with the *trop* or in a style that one normally learns

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*Chumash*, and the entire *pasuk* until “v'al ribayim” should be read. Individuals should not say the sections (near the end of Selichos) written in Aramaic.

3. If there is a chosson during Sheva Berachos or a bris milah in shul, Selichos should still be said until the words “Harachamim v'haselichos”, but Tachanun should be omitted.

**C. Avinu Malkeinu** - Avinu Malkeinu is added after the *chazzan's* repetition of both Shacharis and Mincha. Avinu Malkeinu should be said even when davening without a minyan.

**D. Sim Shalom** - At Mincha “Sim Shalom” is said in place of “Shalom Rav”.

**E. Birchas Kohanim** - At Mincha the *chazzan* recites Birchas Kohanim.

**F. Krias Hatorah** - The *kriah* of “Va'yachel” is read at Shacharis and Mincha on Asara B'Teves.

1. There needs to be at least seven men present who are fasting in order to be obligated in this *kriah*.
2. If it is a Monday or a Thursday Shacharis and there aren't seven men who are fasting, the regular *parshas hashavuah* should be read.

**G. Individuals not Fasting** - An individual who is not fasting should not do the following on Asara B'Teves:

1. He should not be the *shaliach tzibbur*.
2. He should not get an *aliyah*.

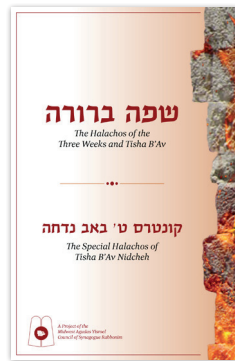
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- a. If they called him up, he should still not take the *aliyah*.
  - b. If the only Kohen in the room is not fasting, he should leave the room before the first *aliyah*.
3. He should not be the *baal koreh*.

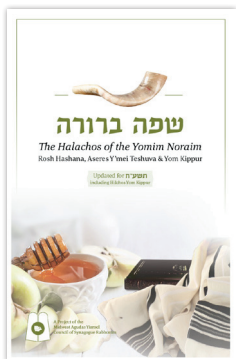
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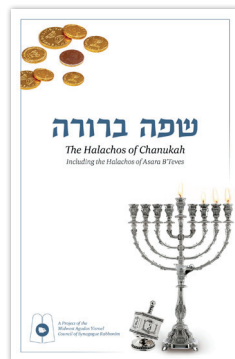
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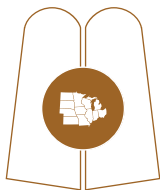
Three Weeks &  
Tisha B'Av



Rosh Hashana &  
Aseres Y'emei Teshuva  
& Yom Kippur



Chanukah



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