

בית הוראה דיעטראיט  
**BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT**  
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher • Rav Yissachar Wolf • Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN • SHABBOS • YOM TOV • BRACHOS • AVEILUS • TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA • EVERYDAY SHAILOS

## ISSUE #12 – ASARAH B'TEVES FAQs

### Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions related to Asarah B'Teves, and in particular, when the fast falls on a Friday. Please note: other fast days have different halachos, a specific shailah should always be asked.

#### • May one eat meat or drink wine on the night before the fast?

- Yes.

#### • May one wake up early to eat before the fast begins.

- Yes, however he should have this intention before going to sleep. If one did not have this intention, he may not eat in the morning but he may drink. One who wants to eat more than a k'beitzah of bread or other 5-grain mezonos items must begin eating 30 minutes prior to alos hashachar. A k'beitzah is defined as the equivalent of 2 fluid ounces (the amount that can be stuffed into a 2 ounce shot glass). **In all cases one must stop eating at alos hashachar (6:47 AM in the Detroit area for Asarah B'Teves 2023).**

#### • Must a sick person fast?

- Chazal did not institute fasting for a person who is deemed halachically ill. If one is sick, he should consult a halachic authority to determine his status. It is important to note that any individual who is not fasting should try to eat out of the public view and should try to minimize eating sweets and delicacies.

#### • Must a pregnant or nursing woman fast?

- There are differing halachic opinions as to the extent to which pregnant or nursing women should attempt to fast. With regard to Asarah B'Teves, a nursing or pregnant woman who experiences any form of weakness should not fast.

#### • Is a chosson or kallah during sheva brachos, or a father on the day of his son's bris, obligated to fast?

- Yes.

#### • May one take medicine on a fast day?

- Pills which have a bitter taste may be swallowed without water. If one cannot swallow the pill without water, or needs to chew it, a halachic authority must be consulted. Medication should not be skipped without proper medical advice and guidance from a halachic authority.

#### • Should children begin fasting before they reach Bar or Bas Mitzvah?

- There is no halachic requirement of chinuch for children to fast at all before they reach bar or bas mitzvah. This includes 'practice fasting.' However, one who has an established minhag to do so should follow the minhag. Children that are old enough to understand the loss of the Bais Hamikdash should be taught to limit their consumption of candy and sweets in a small way.

#### • Is it permitted to brush one's teeth, use mouthwash, or use Listerine strips on the fast day?

- All these are not permitted on a fast day. In a case of great discomfort, mouthwash or teeth brushing can be permitted provided one uses only a small amount of liquid, and bends over the sink while being careful not to swallow anything. Listerine strips are not permitted in all cases since they are swallowed.

#### • Can one shower or bathe on a fast day?

- The minhag is not to take a hot shower or bath for pleasure on a fast day. A cold shower, or one with just enough hot water added to remove the chill, is permitted. This year, when Asarah B'Teves occurs on erev Shabbos, one should shower or bathe with hot water for Shabbos as normal.

#### • Is it permitted to shave or take a haircut on a fast day?

- It is permitted to shave or take a haircut on a fast day, however many are stringent not to do so. This year, because Asarah B'Teves occurs on erev Shabbos, one may be lenient.

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● **May one listen to music on a fast day?**

- It is technically permitted to listen to music on a fast day. However, it is proper to not do so in order to facilitate feeling the loss of the Beis Hamikdash.

● **Is it permitted to do laundry on a fast day?**

- Yes. However, as with any erev Shabbos, the halacha is that laundry should be done prior to Friday except in a case of need.

● **May one taste food while cooking for Shabbos?**

- In general it is not permitted even to taste foods on a fast day. However, if one is cooking for Shabbos or for a Seudas Mitzvah and feels the need to sample the seasoning, it is permitted to taste a small amount of the food and not swallow it.

● **May one exercise on a fast day?**

- It is technically permitted to exercise for health reasons on a fast day. However, if the physical activity will cause a need to break the fast, it is not permitted.

● **May one engage in leisure or recreational activities on the fast?**

- Chazal instituted fast days as a means of inspiring us to reflect on communal tzaros, and introspect on how we can perfect ourselves and come closer to Hashem. Leisure or recreational activities which diminish the seriousness of the day should be avoided on a fast day.

● **May one have dental work done on a fast day?**

- One should not have dental work or a dental cleaning done on a fast day. However, in a case of great need there is room to be lenient.

● **I will be flying during the fast. When does the fast end for me?**

- While traveling, the fast ends at tzais hakochavim based on the time zone of your current location. One who is in the air should follow the time zone governing the land below.

● **If I accidentally ate or drank on the fast, must I continue fasting?**

- Yes.

● **When Asarah B'Teves falls on a Friday, when does the fast end?**

- The fast ends at tzais hakochavim as it normally does. Therefore, one must be careful not to make kiddush until that time. There are various opinions for determining tzais on a fast. One should follow his or her family minhag or consult a halachic authority.

● **May one drink water before kiddush?**

No. However, in a case of need one may drink immediately after kiddush (even before hamotzi). If one drank from the kiddush, he would not make a bracha rishona or achrona on the subsequent drink. One who wants to have a dairy drink (e.g. coffee with milk) must have a pareve drink (e.g. water) after the coffee and prior to continuing the fleishig meal.

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