

Laws of Fasts, Chapter 1 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Laws of Fasts — Rambam, Chapter 1

Introduction — The Place of Laws of Fasts in Sefer Zemanim

Sefer Zemanim has ten sections:

- **First four:** Shevitat Shabbat, Eruvin, Shevitat Asor (Yom Kippur), Shevitat Yom Tov — general laws of resting.
- **Three sections** of specific mitzvot of holidays: Chametz U'Matzah (Pesach), Shofar Sukkah V'Lulav (Tishrei), Shekalim (Adar).
- **Kiddush HaChodesh** — general law, dependent on time.
- **Chanukah and Purim** — rabbinic holidays, come last.
- **Ta'anivot** — there are fasts that come every year (Tisha B'Av, four fasts) and other fasts (like fasts for rain). The main reason why Laws of Fasts are in Sefer Zemanim is because it's a time on the calendar — when making a calendar one must also write when we fast. Fasts for rain are perhaps the main reason — because it's more fixed (every year there's an order when we begin fasting for rain).

Structure of Laws of Fasts

- **Chapter 1** — the mitzvah of crying out and sounding, and then the rabbinic mitzvah of fasting, with the general laws of fasting.
- **Chapter 2** — what are the troubles for which we fast, laws of a great trouble.
- **Chapters 3 and 4** — laws of fasting for rain, which has a whole order.
- **Chapter 5** — the rabbinic fasts (four fasts plus Ta'anit Esther which is a custom).

Title / Introduction — The Mitzvah of Fasting

The Rambam's words: "One positive commandment, which is to fast and cry out before Hashem at every time of great trouble that comes upon the community."

Simple Meaning

When a great trouble comes upon the community, there is a positive commandment to do two things: (1) fast, (2) cry out before the Holy One Blessed be He.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) The Rambam's great innovation — a Torah-level mitzvah for fasting:

All fasts (except Yom Kippur which is abstention from eating) are not explicit in the Torah. Tisha B'Av was instituted by the prophets, fasting for rain depends on circumstances. In the Gemara and Mishnah it's not clearly stated that this is a mitzvah. The Rambam, for whom everything must have a mitzvah-structure, innovated that there is a **general mitzvah from the Torah** — when a great trouble comes upon the

community, there is an obligation to fast and cry out. The specific fasts (fasting for rain, four fasts) are a fulfillment of the general mitzvah.

2) Fasting is rabbinic, crying out is Torah-level:

Within the laws the Rambam says that **fasting is rabbinic** (from the words of the scribes), and the Torah-level part is **crying out and sounding with trumpets**. This is seemingly a contradiction with the title which writes "to fast and cry out" as one mitzvah. One must know how much to be precise from the title.

3) Great trouble upon the community — not an individual, not a small trouble:

The mitzvah is only for a **great trouble** upon the **community** — not upon an individual (an individual's trouble is not a Torah-level mitzvah), and not a small trouble. A "small trouble" is what we pray for every day in the Shemoneh Esrei (Refa'einu, Bareich Aleinu). **Great trouble** means something extraordinary, not the normal order of the world.

4) Difference between Rambam and Ramban regarding prayer in time of trouble:

People say there's a dispute between Rambam and Ramban, but this is **not accurate**. The Rambam has an **extra mitzvah** — not the regular prayer, but a different kind of gathering that the Beit Din must establish. The Ramban means that when a person feels in trouble he should turn to the Almighty — this is more individual. For the Rambam the obligation is only after there are rules (for example with rain — when it should already have rained).

5) The communal nature of the mitzvah:

Sounding trumpets is always a strong public matter — the Beit Din blows, the Kohen, the king. A communal fast is something the community does. The Rambam says "at every time of trouble upon the community" — certainly each individual must do it, but the definition is communal.

6) Question: What is the Torah-level fulfillment in specific fasts?

When the Beit Din decrees a fast (for example the 17th of Cheshvan), is the person who fasts fulfilling the Torah-level mitzvah? Perhaps **the Torah-level mitzvah is upon the Beit Din to decree** (a mitzvah upon the Beit Din to decree), not upon the individual's fasting itself. But the language "to fast and cry out before Hashem" implies that we're already speaking of the fast itself, not just the decree. This remains an open question.

7) Tisha B'Av — not Torah-level:

Tisha B'Av is certainly not Torah-level, and the Rambam doesn't say it as a Torah-level obligation.

8) Comparison to Chanukah/Purim — thanksgiving:

For Chanukah and Purim the Rambam doesn't say it's Torah-level, but thanking the Almighty for good things is presumably

indeed a part of prayer/service of Hashem from the Torah. The Rambam wants the mitzvah to have clear parameters, not just a general conduct.

9) The Rambam never says that the rabbis "develop" the Torah:

The Rambam **never** says that the rabbis' enactments are an interpretation of a Torah-level mitzvah (unlike for example with *pri etz hadar* where *etrog* is an interpretation). The fasting laws of the Sages are not an "interpretation" of fasting and crying out — they are a separate enactment, although they stand in connection with the general mitzvah.

Law 1 — Positive Commandment from the Torah to Cry Out and Sound with Trumpets

The Rambam's words: "It is a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and sound with trumpets upon every trouble that comes upon the community, as it says 'upon the enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound with trumpets'... meaning anything that troubles you such as drought, plague, locusts and the like."

Simple Meaning

It is a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and blow trumpets for every trouble that comes upon the community. The source is the verse in Bamidbar (10:9).

Novel Points and Explanations

1) The meaning of "leharia":

The word "teruah" doesn't necessarily mean blowing with an instrument — it means in general "making a sound/noise." One can do it with the mouth too, as it says "hariu lifnei hamelech Hashem" and "vayariu bekolo." Sometimes it means shofar, sometimes trumpets.

2) The Rambam brings specifically only the second part of the verse:

The entire context of the section on trumpets (Bamidbar 10) speaks of various uses: gathering the people, journeys, war, joy, festivals, sacrifices. The Rambam intentionally doesn't bring the beginning of the verse "When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you" — he brings only "against the enemy who oppresses you and you shall sound with trumpets." He doesn't want people to think this is only a law in war. He relies on the **Sifrei** which expounds: "From where [do we know] for every trouble?" — from the word "tzar" we learn that it doesn't mean only a human enemy, but any trouble.

3) The Rambam's expansion — "meaning anything that troubles you":

The Rambam explains that "tzar" means "anything that troubles you" — everything that hurts you. The "tzar" doesn't have to be a person — it can be drought, plague, locusts, and the like. This is an innovation of the Sages (Sifrei) which the Rambam rules as law.

4) Trumpets is not a separate mitzvah — it's a way of crying out:

The Rambam wants to bring out that the trumpets is not a separate mitzvah by itself — it's a way of "crying out." Therefore he writes "to cry out and sound with trumpets" together. Although one does blow trumpets at a fast (as stated in the Mishnah), the main mitzvah is the outcry to the

Almighty, and the trumpets is the expression of it. The source for the "before Hashem" aspect is perhaps from "and you shall be remembered before Hashem your God" which appears in the continuation of the verse.

5) Parallel to the Book of Yoel:

In the Book of Yoel — one of the great sources for understanding what a communal fast looks like — it says "blow shofar in Zion, sanctify a fast, call an assembly." There the trouble was locusts, and Yoel describes the locusts like a war: "And Hashem gave His voice before His army, for His camp is very great." This fits with the Rambam's exposition that "tzar" includes also natural catastrophes — sometimes the "army" is people, sometimes locusts.

6) The difference between tekiah and teruah:

Tekiah is more practical (for the camp's journey, to gather the congregation — "you shall blow and not sound"), while **teruah** is connected with prayer and outcry ("and you shall sound with trumpets" — "when you go to war"). This fits with what books bring that teruah hints at the attribute of judgment, and tekiah at the attribute of kindness. Also "and on your days of joy you shall blow" — tekiah is more joy, teruah more judgment.

7) Shabbat Rosh Hashanah — "remembrance of sounding":

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat and we don't blow shofar (because of a rabbinic decree), the prayer itself is also a teruah — because outcry and shofar are synonyms. "Remembrance of sounding" means that the essence of teruah is "and you shall be remembered before Hashem your God" — when we can't blow shofar, we do the other part of "and you shall be remembered" through prayer.

Law 1 (continued) — "This matter is from the ways of repentance"

The Rambam's words: "When trouble comes and they cry out upon it and sound — everyone will know that because of their evil deeds evil has come to them, as it is written 'your iniquities have turned these away,' and this will cause them to remove the trouble from upon them."

Simple Meaning

The mitzvah of outcry and fasting is not a law in prayer (asking the Almighty to help), but a law in **ways of repentance** — a way that leads to repentance. Through crying out and blowing shofar the people become aroused to understand that their evil deeds brought the trouble, and through repentance they will remove the troubles.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) Ways of repentance ≠ repentance:

The Rambam uses specifically "ways of repentance" — as in Laws of Repentance — which means a **way** to repentance, not repentance itself. Fasting is not repentance (as Yoel says "rend your hearts and not your garments"), but a means that arouses to repentance. Repentance itself — the "switch" — can be in one moment, but ways of repentance (the process of becoming a better person) takes long.

2) The Rambam's foundation: The point is not prayer to the Almighty, but repentance of people:

The Rambam disagrees with the simple understanding that everyone has — that we pray so the Almighty will help. The Almighty doesn't need to "change His mind" — He already wants to help. The question is not on the Almighty, but on the person. The person must change. Therefore the mitzvah is not "prayer" but "outcry and sounding" — arousing the people to repentance.

3) Question: What does praying have to do with repentance?

If the matter is repentance, why do we pray? The Rambam didn't mention "prayer" but "outcry and sounding" — this is not asking the Almighty, but awakening the people. The one who calls together the people (the tzaddik, Beit Din) already knows; but repentance depends on the heart and deeds of everyone, therefore one must gather the entire people.

4) Crying out to the Almighty is not the purpose, but a means to repentance:

Crying out to the Almighty is a means to awaken the person's contemplation that things don't happen by chance, but the Almighty runs the world through reward and punishment. If one cries out to the Almighty but doesn't contemplate and doesn't come to repentance, one has accomplished nothing — as the Rambam says regarding shofar (in Laws of Repentance).

5) "Everything is from Heaven" is also an aspect of keri:

If one says "everything is from Heaven" in the sense that the person can do nothing, this is also a form of "keri" (chance/fatalism), because then the person can do nothing. The true matter is that the Almighty is involved (not chance), but the person has a role to play through repentance and good deeds.

6) The shofar as "invitation" — from chance to providence:

Just as shofar invites people "for the camp's journey" (to move the camp), so the shofar at times of trouble invites that one should stop living in a "world of chance" and begin to live with awareness that the Almighty is involved.

7) R' Avraham son of the Rambam's proof from the Mishnah:

R' Avraham son of the Rambam brings the Mishnah (which the Rambam himself brings later) that the elder says "everything depends on the deeds" — "rend your hearts and not your garments." What the Rambam says that it's not about prayer itself but about good deeds, comes from the Mishnah.

8) Why then a prayer? — Because it tears people out of their "inertia":

If the main thing is deeds, why make a prayer? Because prayer tears people out of their habit (inertia). It awakens them to think differently.

Law 1 (continued) — "But if they do not cry out... this is a way of cruelty"

The Rambam's words: "But if they do not cry out and do not sound, but say this thing happened to us according to the way of the world and this trouble happened by chance — this is a way of cruelty, and causes them to cling to their evil deeds and the trouble will add other troubles. This is what is written

in the Torah 'and if you walk with Me with keri, I will walk with you with fury of keri.'"

Simple Meaning

Whoever doesn't cry out and thinks the trouble is chance / "way of the world," this is a way of cruelty, which causes one to remain with evil deeds, and more troubles will come.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) Great innovation — what "chance" means for the Rambam:

Most people think "chance" means denying that the Almighty runs the world — that it's not the work of Hashem. **This is completely false.** The Rambam is not speaking of belief that the Almighty does everything (this was never in doubt). On the contrary — even one who says "the Almighty made this trouble for me, but we don't understand why, the Almighty sometimes makes troubles" — **this is also a way of cruelty!** Because he misses the main point: the trouble came **from your evil deeds**, and you must change. To say "everything is from Heaven" without understanding that your deeds caused it — is **the same thing** as saying chance.

2) "Chance" = not connected to my deeds:

The true meaning of "chance" according to the Rambam is not that it's not from God, but that it **has nothing to do with my deeds**. The person accepts that the Almighty runs things, but he doesn't see a connection between his sins and the trouble. This is the "keri" — it's "just happened," even if the Almighty did it.

3) The Rambam's interpretation of "keri" — from the language of chance:

The Rambam explains: when I bring a trouble so you should repent, but you say it's "keri" (chance), I will bring more "fury of that keri." **This is the Rambam's own exposition**, not simple peshat. None of the commentators before the Rambam said that keri means chance:

- **Rashi** explains keri as "casual" — you will conduct yourself with mitzvot casually, sometimes yes sometimes no. And the Almighty will also be "sometimes good, sometimes bad."

- **Rashbam** brings in the name of Menachem that it's a language of prevention.

- **Ibn Ezra** brings in the name of the majority that it's from the language of strong and enduring (wickedness/hardness/anger).

Question on Rashi: "And I will walk with you with fury of keri" is very difficult to read according to Rashi's interpretation — what does "fury of keri" mean if keri means casual? This fits better with the commentators who say it's from the language of hardness and anger.

4) The Rambam's foundation in providence: "given over to chances":

The Rambam holds that by default the world is "given over to chances." There is an order of nature, it's certainly under providence in the sense that the Almighty made nature that way — but it runs "without plan, without reason, without intention." The Rambam calls it "possible nature" (as he explains in Laws of Repentance) — sometimes a storm, sometimes not, without a specific plan.

Individual providence is only for the righteous: People by default — and even animals — don't have individual providence. This doesn't mean the Almighty doesn't run it, but

that it runs without a special plan. Only if someone is a tzaddik and he has a "divine flow" through his intellect, does he receive special providence. The Rambam's greatest proof is the verse in Parashat Ha'azinu: "And I will hide My face from them and they will be for consumption" — when the Almighty hides His face, the person becomes "for consumption" (food for others), because he is given over to chances.

5) The Rambam's interpretation is the opposite of what people think:

People think the Rambam says "you shouldn't believe the troubles came by chance." But the Rambam says the opposite: **the troubles indeed came by chance!** If you do repentance, you will exit "from the category of chance" and the Almighty will protect you. The deeper meaning of repentance is: removing a person from the world of chance through repentance.

6) "I will add to you fury of that keri":

The Almighty doesn't say "I will send you more punishment" — He says "more keri will come." In the world of keri there is momentum — the bad results grow naturally.

7) The parallel between a person's own conduct and providence:

Just as with the Almighty there are chances and individual providence, so too with a person: when a person doesn't take care of his desires, he lets his own life go "by chances" — sometimes good mood, sometimes bad mood. When he's angry he gets angry, when he's in a good mood he's nice. This results in that after enough times of bad mood, he finds himself with a "bunch of enemies." **Whereas** when he "watches over himself in detail" — takes care of his transgressions and character traits — he receives individual providence. "And if you walk with Me with keri" means not just transgressions — it means he lets his **entire life** go with such chances — without control, without watching over himself.

8) The essence of fasting — "it's not the world conducting itself as usual":

The main thing of fasting is to say: "today is something special — it's not just a day of eating and a day of shadow." Through this the person awakens: "who's making this? — I'm making it!" — and this leads to repentance.

9) What does "so that you will return" mean?

When the Rambam says that troubles come "so that you will return," it doesn't mean the Almighty consciously sends troubles as punishment. The meaning is that when a great trouble comes, a person grasps how bad his deeds are — he sees the consequences. **Troubles don't come through miracles.** The simple parable: a person is lazy, doesn't work, doesn't get money. From one day there's not yet a great trouble — he borrows. But with time all the creditors come together, and it becomes a great trouble. Then he grasps "your iniquities have turned these away." He has two options: (1) say the Almighty did it — this is "way of cruelty" because he takes no responsibility; (2) recognize that he himself caused it — this leads to repentance.

10) Natural catastrophes — the Ibn Ezra's approach:

Natural catastrophes happen because people live in places where such things happen. The **Ibn Ezra** explains: when a city is decreed through the way of nature that there should be a trouble, the Almighty saves the righteous by giving them a

"feeling/knowledge," and therefore they leave. In a plague — there are remedies. If something is not dependent on people's deeds, one doesn't just pray for a miracle.

11) "Way of cruelty" — the way that leads to cruelty:

Just as "ways of repentance" means the way that leads to repentance, "way of cruelty" means the way that leads to cruelty. When a person says "the whole world is bad/chance," it gives him permission to be cruel — he abuses workers, tenants, because "that's how the world is." This is the epitome of chance — if everything is random, no one is responsible. The opposite: if everything is bad, it's a problem that must be fixed.

12) Troubles test the person — two directions:

When troubles come to good people, they do repentance. When troubles come to bad people, they steal from each other, survive at the other's expense, become worse. This is the "way of cruelty" — troubles themselves don't automatically lead to repentance.

[Digression: The Klausenberger Rebbe's testimony] — The Klausenberger Rebbe, who was in Auschwitz, said he's ready to testify in Heaven that if the Almighty's plan was to bring troubles so people should repent — it doesn't work. No one repented. Troubles themselves don't bring repentance; it has to do with where the people stand.

13) Connection to the 13 Attributes of Mercy — transforming the attribute of judgment to the attribute of mercy:

The Rambam learns in Moreh Nevuchim (chapter 54) that the secret of the 13 Attributes of Mercy is that the Almighty taught Moshe Rabbeinu how to conduct oneself with people — with mercy, especially a leader. Mercy is not made just to say, but to do ("they shall do before Me according to this order" — you should do).

The "world of chance" is a "cruel world" — a world of the attribute of judgment. How does one transform the attribute of judgment to the attribute of mercy? Not through mystical manipulation in upper worlds, but through making a human world built on justice and law and mercy — that we take care of each other. Therefore we decree a fast when the community has a trouble — through this we bring in the attribute of mercy to the world. In the language of Kabbalah: we bring in "mochin" — instead of things being random, we do it with intention and knowledge.

14) Mekubalim are a level above the Rambam:

The mekubalim (especially the Ramak) learned Rambam. When they say things, it's after one already knows the Rambam's basics — they add another level. If one doesn't learn the Rambam, one can wrongly learn the mekubalim. The dispute between Rambam and mekubalim is more "we expound meanings" — even the mekubalim agree that we arouse upper attributes through what we do down here.

[Digression: Example of Simchat Torah massacre] — When a great tragedy happens (like the Simchat Torah attack in Eretz Yisrael), every person is tested. The person who is already on a "cruel way" — for him the trouble confirms that the world is cruel. The person who is a good person — for him it proves that one must seek a way of mercy, that one should blow shofar, that there is a way out, a way to become better.

Law 2 — From the Words of the Scribes to Fast

The Rambam's words: "From the words of the scribes to fast upon every trouble that comes upon the community until they are shown mercy from Heaven. And on these fast days they cry out in prayers and supplicate and sound with trumpets only. And if they were in the Temple they sound with trumpets and with shofar... the shofar shortens and the trumpets lengthen, for the mitzvah of the day is with trumpets. And one does not sound with trumpets and shofar together except in the Temple, as it says 'with trumpets and the sound of shofar sound before the King, Hashem.'"

Simple Meaning

From the words of the scribes (rabbinically) one should fast upon every trouble that comes upon the community, until mercy comes from Heaven. On these fast days we cry out in prayers, we supplicate, and we blow trumpets. In the Temple we blow both trumpets and shofar together, but the trumpets make longer because the mitzvah of the day is with trumpets. Outside Jerusalem we blow only trumpets alone.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) Why is fasting rabbinic and not Torah-level?

In the Torah it doesn't say to fast for troubles. The Rambam thinks the Torah-level mitzvah is only to cry out and blow trumpets. The Sages added the fast.

2) What did the Sages actually add?

Two approaches: (a) The Sages made it institutional — not just give a cry, but we set aside a day when all Jews cry out together. (b) The Sages added the element of fasting, which is not in the Torah.

3) Trumpets Torah-level vs. trumpets rabbinic — two functions:

Torah-level the trumpets are possibly more a "call to prayer" — as in Yoel "blow shofar call a fast," the shofar announces the fast. But rabbinically, in the order of a fast, the trumpets become a part of the prayer itself — we blow trumpets "upon the prayer," as a part of the outcry.

4) "Temple" means Jerusalem:

It's discussed whether "in the Temple" means the Temple itself or Jerusalem in general. The Rambam already in Laws of Shofar (Rosh Hashanah) ruled that "Temple" can mean Jerusalem. The Mishnah speaks of "at the eastern gate and the Temple Mount" — so not necessarily inside the Temple.

5) Shofar singular, trumpets plural:

"Shofar" is always singular (one blower) and "trumpets" plural — because from the verse "make for yourself two silver trumpets" a trumpets is always a set of two. Perhaps trumpets by nature is an instrument that one plays in a group.

6) Parallel with Rosh Hashanah:

On Rosh Hashanah it's the opposite — shofar makes longer and trumpets makes shorter, because the mitzvah of the day is with shofar. On a fast — trumpets makes longer because the mitzvah of the day is with trumpets. But both together is only in the Temple. Outside: Rosh Hashanah only shofar, fast only trumpets.

7) Why don't we blow trumpets today at fasts?

The **Magen Avraham** (Laws of Fasts chapter 1) asked this question — according to the Rambam it's a mitzvah, why don't we do it? **Rabbi Yaakov Emden** argued that we need special trumpets (silver) and special Kohanim — but it's not clear how strong this answer is. It's hard to believe the Rambam conducted himself with trumpets and no one heard of it. Perhaps the Rambam only wants to connect the Torah-level mitzvah with the rabbinic — that when we do repentance and fasting, we fulfill the spirit of the mitzvah, even without actual trumpets. "The main thing is anything that awakens people."

8) Jerusalem custom today:

Today at the Western Wall there is a custom (Sephardic) to blow both trumpets and shofar — "trumpets and the sound of shofar" — like restoring the crown to its former glory.

Law 3 — Order of Fasts: Monday and Thursday, week after week

The Rambam's words: "These fasts that are decreed upon the community because of troubles, we don't make them day after day... for most of the community cannot withstand this matter. And we don't decree at the beginning a fast except on Monday and on the Thursday after it and on the Monday after it... until they are shown mercy from Heaven."

Simple Meaning

When we decree fasts for a trouble, we don't fast every day consecutively — but Monday, Thursday, Monday. This is repeated again until the trouble goes away.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) Two separate laws in one statement:

(1) We don't fast every day consecutively — "for most of the community cannot withstand this matter"; (2) We don't begin from a Thursday — "we don't decree at the beginning" but from Monday.

2) Why not begin Thursday?

Because Thursday is erev Shabbat (we buy for Shabbat, we don't want to drive up prices). If we already fasted Monday, we can fast Thursday — but not begin Thursday.

3) The order: three by three:

We decree three fasts at once — Monday, Thursday, Monday. Afterwards, if necessary, again Monday, Thursday, Monday. This is the order from Tractate Ta'anit (fasting for rain).

4) The Rambam's general application:

The source of this order comes from fasting for rain, but the Rambam writes it as a general law — for every trouble upon the community, not just rain.

5) Week after week until it stops:

The Rambam's logic is that since a fast is made so we should repent and the trouble should stop, we must decree a fast **week after week** until it ends — not just make a fast once. Every week is a "check" whether the trouble is still there.

6) Lamenting the situation in our time:

In the last thousand years we haven't practically carried out this order. We sometimes make a BaHaB, but not "according to the order until the trouble goes away." Even during World War II the rabbis couldn't all come together and decree a fast — there was too much dispute, opinions and approaches. This itself is a sign why we're not yet at redemption. There was one

day — they used the Tenth of Tevet — but the zealots were against it.

7) Practical suggestion:

If today it's too hard for people to fast, at least go back to the "beginning" — every hour on a Thursday, add a prayer, pray, and blow trumpets "until they are shown mercy."

8) For the Rambam we never fast for a trouble that already was:

We always fast for a trouble that is **now**, and when it goes away we stop fasting.

9) Question from "there is no day whose troubles are not many":

If every day there are troubles, why don't we establish a fast every day? This is not a "great trouble" in that sense — this is the general situation of exile, for which we already fast the four fasts. A specific trouble needs a specific fast.

Law 4 — We Don't Decree a Fast on Shabbat and Holidays

The Rambam's words: ***"We don't decree a fast upon the community neither on Shabbat nor on holidays. And similarly we don't sound on them neither with shofar nor with trumpets, and we don't cry out and supplicate in prayer. Except if a gentile city surrounded them, or a river, and even an individual pursued by gentiles or by bandits or by an evil spirit — we fast for them on Shabbat, and cry out and supplicate in prayers. But

Summary of Laws of Fasts — Rambam, Chapter 1

Law 4 — We Don't Decree a Fast on Shabbat and Holidays (continued)

The Rambam's words: "We don't decree a fast upon the community neither on Shabbat nor on holidays. And similarly we don't sound on them neither with shofar nor with trumpets, and we don't cry out and supplicate in prayer. Except if a gentile city surrounded them, or a river, and even an individual pursued by gentiles or by bandits or by an evil spirit — we fast for them on Shabbat, and cry out and supplicate in prayers. But we don't sound, except if [we sound] to gather the people to go help them and save them."

Simple Meaning

Shabbat and Yom Tov we don't decree a fast, we don't blow shofar/trumpets, and we don't cry out in prayer. But for an acute trouble — a city surrounded by gentiles, or an individual pursued by gentiles/bandits/evil spirit — we may indeed fast and cry out on Shabbat. Shofar we blow only if we need it practically to gather people to go save.

Novel Points and Explanations

1) Why not Shabbat?

Two approaches: (1) There's a mitzvah of joy/oneg Shabbat, (2) Practically — the people always need to eat.

2) Shofar on Shabbat:

The prohibition is like Rosh Hashanah we don't blow shofar on Shabbat (lest he carry it four cubits / lest he go to an expert). It's discussed whether shofar is a "musical instrument" (lest he fix a musical instrument). Lest he fix a

musical instrument is actually on string instruments that constantly need tuning (striking with a hammer), but trumpets and shofar are "simple sounds" — a hole in a piece of wood/metal. Therefore the prohibition is not from musical instruments, but from the matter that Shabbat is not a time of mourning.

3) Gentiles vs. bandits:

Gentiles means antisemites who pursue him because he's a Jew; bandits because he has money (can be even Jewish bandits, no difference).

4) Only for a trouble that is now:

We're not speaking of news that Jews have already died, but that they **are in danger** — it's now a trouble that can still be saved.

5) Why may we on Shabbat?

The **innovation** is not pikuach nefesh (crying out on Shabbat is not a Torah prohibition, it's only a matter of simchat Shabbat). The innovation is that **the crying out is real** — if we quickly do repentance, we can still save. It's not just a matter so the people should awaken (which can wait until Sunday), but it actually works.

6) Shofar on Shabbat — only for practical rescue:

Even for an acute trouble on Shabbat, we don't blow shofar — in any case we may cry out in prayer. Only if we need the shofar practically to gather people to go save, then yes. The Rambam **doesn't** mention that this is a mitzvah like "to gather the people" (trumpets in the desert). It could be that mitzvah was only in the desert, and here it's only a practical thing — like an ambulance with sirens, which we may do even a Torah prohibition for pikuach nefesh.

7) What does "sounding" mean here?

Perhaps the Rambam means: we don't blow in shul so everyone should run (which won't help — they'll all be killed), but so **the few wise people who have solutions** should grasp the severity of the matter and come up with advice.

8) Dispute between Rambam and Rashi — fasting on Shabbat:

The Rambam holds that we fast on Shabbat for an actual acute trouble. **Rashi and other commentators** hold that we **don't** fast on Shabbat — we perhaps pray, but we don't fast. Rashi's reasoning: "our fasts won't help anyway."

9) Practical difference — Simchat Torah massacre:

When there was a trouble in Eretz Yisrael (Simchat Torah), many people continued making hakafot as usual without any change. This is **not** the right way. According to the **Rambam we should have fasted**, and according to the **Tur we don't fast but we pray**. But **everyone agrees that we must pray** — if the Almighty makes a trouble on Shabbat, we must do something on Shabbat. The difference between Rishonim is only regarding fasting, but **outcry** is permitted even on Shabbat and Yom Tov when it's truly a trouble.

Law 4 (continued) — We Don't Decree a Fast Initially on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, Purim, Chol HaMoed

The Rambam's words: "And similarly we don't decree fasts initially on Rosh Chodesh, or on Chanukah, or on Purim, or on Chol HaMoed."

Simple Meaning

When the Sages decree a series of fasts (Monday and Thursday), we don't begin on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, Purim, or Chol HaMoed. But if we already began the series and one of the days falls on such a day, we do fast.

Novel Points

- **Difference between initially and if it occurs:** The first day of a fast-series we may not make on Rosh Chodesh etc. But if we already began (for example Monday we already fasted) and Thursday is Rosh Chodesh — **we do fast**, because **if it occurs** means we continue.

- **Difference from Shabbat:** On Shabbat, **even if it occurs** we don't fast. Shabbat is different — even if we're already in the middle of a series of fasts, we don't make a fast on Shabbat. This is a strong difference between Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh/Chanukah/Purim.

Law — Pregnant Women, Nursing Women, and Children
The Rambam's words: "These fasts that we fast for troubles — neither pregnant women nor nursing women nor children fast on them."

Simple Meaning

For fasts for troubles, pregnant women, nursing women, and children don't fast.

Novel Points

- **Difference from Ta'anit Esther:** The Rambam said for Ta'anit Esther that **even pregnant and nursing women must fast**, but for fasts for troubles — not. Children don't need to in any case.

- **Reasoning why children don't:** For gentiles (Book of Yonah, Nineveh) they even made animals fast, because they think **the fast itself accomplishes** — more people = more power. But **we understand that the main thing is repentance** — what do you want from an innocent child? Let the adults conduct themselves better.

Law — Permitted to Eat at Night; Law of Sleep

The Rambam's words: "And they are permitted to eat at night even though they fast tomorrow, except for the fast for rain as will be explained. And every fast on which we eat at night, whether community or individual, one may eat and drink until dawn rises, provided he doesn't sleep. But if he slept — he doesn't return and eat."

Simple Meaning

For fasts for troubles we may eat at night (unlike Yom Kippur/Tisha B'Av). We may eat until dawn, but only if we didn't go to sleep. If we already went to sleep — we may not eat anymore.

Novel Points

- **Difference from the fast for rain:** The fast for lack of rain does indeed begin from the night, unlike other fasts.

- **Reasoning of sleep = interruption:** Going to sleep is a **withdrawal of attention** — a normal person doesn't get up before dawn and eat, so going to sleep is as if he already interrupted.

- **A condition helps:** The **Tur/Shulchan Aruch** brings that if one makes a **condition** before going to sleep that he

will get up and eat — he may. The Rambam himself doesn't mention this condition.

- **Learning from eating at night:** What is the foundation that at night we may eat all night? **At night it's like an individual fast** — the entire community fasts from when a normal person begins his day. If you're still up, you never finished your day.

- **Person with a custom to get up at night:** If someone has a custom that he wakes up in the middle of the night and drinks water — he has no problem, because this is his regular custom.

Law — Individual Fast for His Trouble

The Rambam's words: "Just as the community fasts for their trouble, so the individual fasts for his trouble. How? If he had a sick person, or one lost in the desert, or imprisoned in jail — he should fast for him... and seek mercy in his prayer and say Aneinu in every prayer he prays... He doesn't fast on Shabbat nor on festivals nor on Rosh Chodesh nor on Chanukah and Purim."

Simple Meaning

Just as the community fasts for a communal trouble, so an individual has a matter to fast when one of his close ones is in trouble — sick, lost in the desert, or in captivity. He says Aneinu in every prayer. He doesn't fast on Shabbat, Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim.

Novel Points

1) Three of the four who must give thanks:

The Rambam lists three of the four categories of the four who must give thanks (sick person, lost in the desert, imprisoned in jail).

2) What does "he had" mean?

The Rambam doesn't say explicitly who "he had" means. **It could be that someone who is more merciful, his "he had" is broader** — not just wife and children, but also neighbors, good friends, anyone it touches him.

3) Dispute whether it's an obligation or permission:

The **Maggid Mishneh** is precise from the language "**just as the community fasts... so the individual**" that it's an **obligation**, just like for the community. But the precision of the language "**he should fast**" shows that it means **permission/mitzvah but not complete obligation**, because "he should" in the Rambam usually means "he has permission" — he may.

4) "To seek mercy in his prayer" is the main point:

More than the fast itself. If a person is sufficiently aroused and seeks mercy, the fast is not necessarily required. The fast is a means to help become more aroused.

5) BaHaB (Monday-Thursday-Monday) is not relevant for an individual:

BaHaB is only a law of the community. An individual can fast whichever day he wants, even Tuesday.

6) The matter of a fast is not to suffer:

The matter is that one sets aside a day with intention. A story is told of a rabbi who didn't eat and said "I'm not fasting, but who has strength to eat in such a trouble?" — this is great pain,

but this is not a law of fasting. A law of fasting must be with acceptance.

[Digression: Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin — the individual's power over himself] — **Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen** (in the name of his rabbi the **Izhbitzer**) says: just as the Torah gave power to the Sages to decree decrees on the community ("He will make the Torah great"), **the same power the individual has over himself**. When a person sees in himself a weakness or a bad character trait, it becomes as if **his own rabbinic mitzvah** — he obligates himself to work on it, and once he takes it upon himself, it's a complete obligation. **The person over himself is the master over himself, just as the Sages are master over the community.**

Law — How Does One Accept a Fast

The Rambam's words: "How does one accept? After he prays Minchah he says after the prayer 'I am in a fast' and completes in his heart to fast tomorrow. And so even though he eats at night he hasn't lost anything."

Simple Meaning

One accepts a fast after Minchah by saying "I am in a fast" and completing in his heart. One may eat at night.

Novel Points

- **Both things are necessary** — he says (speech) and he completes in his heart.
- **Difference between individual fast and communal fast:** For a communal fast the fast begins from when one ate the last meal at night. For an individual fast one may eat at night — the fast is only during the day.
- **Acceptance for multiple days:** If one accepts three or four days consecutively, one may eat every night, and one doesn't need a separate acceptance for each day — one acceptance is valid for all days.
- **Acceptance only for one day, then reconsidered:** If one accepted only for tomorrow, and after fasting (even without eating in between) decided to fast another day — **this is not a fast**, because it lacks acceptance while still day for the second day.
- **Got up early in the morning and decided to fast** — this is not a fast at all, because it lacks acceptance while still day.

Law — Fast for a Dream

The Rambam's words: "One who sees a bad dream needs to fast the next day so that he will return and awaken to his deeds and return in repentance."

Simple Meaning

Whoever sees a bad dream must fast the next day in order to do repentance.

Novel Points

1) The Rambam's explanation why we fast for a bad dream:

Not because it's a segulah (as others think "a fast is good for a dream"), but **so that he will return and awaken to his deeds** — he should do repentance and awaken. The Rambam uses the language "and awaken" — the same language as for

blowing shofar. He's sleeping when he dreams — stop sleeping!

2) Connection to blowing shofar:

The Rambam's approach to shofar is that the matter is awakening from sleep — one shouldn't dream, one should think. The same principle applies here.

3) What does "bad dream" mean?

(a) Perhaps a dream of sin (like nocturnal emission), which shows he thinks bad things during the day. (b) The conclusion is that a bad dream means a frightening dream — a dream that shows troubles, that frightens the person. The person should grasp that troubles can indeed come if one doesn't do repentance.

4) "Needs" — an obligation:

The Rambam says "needs to fast," which is stronger than other Rishonim who say it's only advice for whoever is afraid.

5) No acceptance while still day is necessary:

For a fast for a dream one doesn't need to accept beforehand — immediately when he wakes up from the dream he begins fasting. This is explained that it's as if from Heaven they already gave him the acceptance.

Law — Fast for a Dream on Shabbat

The Rambam's words: "He fasts even on Shabbat, and prays Aneinu in every prayer, even though he didn't accept it while still day. But one who fasts on Shabbat fasts another day because of nullifying oneg Shabbat."

Simple Meaning

A fast for a dream we may fast even on Shabbat, with Aneinu. But afterwards one must fast another day for having nullified oneg Shabbat.

Novel Points

1) Difference between a fast for a dream and a regular individual fast:

For a regular individual fast we don't fast on Shabbat. But for a fast for a dream, where from Heaven we were aroused to fast, we fast even on Shabbat.

2) Fast for nullifying oneg Shabbat — puzzling:

The person already didn't fulfill oneg Shabbat, and now we afflict him even more with a second fast? Perhaps it would make more sense that he should eat two cholents on Sunday "in memory of oneg Shabbat"?

Answer #1: Perhaps the Rambam means that the fast on Shabbat wasn't a legitimate fast (because we nullified oneg Shabbat), therefore one must still fast a day for the dream. But against this: where do we find that every time one nullifies oneg Shabbat one must fast a day?

Answer #2: Perhaps there's a law on Shabbat that repentance should be "of the same kind." But this doesn't fit, because the Rambam says fast on Sunday, not eat more on Shabbat. And "two cholents" is no longer oneg Shabbat — more than oneg is no longer oneg.

Conclusion: It remains puzzling, but the Rambam rules according to the Gemara ("he should add a fast to his fast"). In the Gemara it says that a fast has to do with repentance, and he must do repentance for his fast.

[Digression: The Rambam in Laws of Sacrificial Offerings says "words of dreams neither raise up nor bring down." Rav Hai Gaon's reasoning is that we fast on Shabbat because the person won't have oneg Shabbat anyway — he thinks all day about his frightening dream. But the Rambam doesn't bring all these interpretations.]

Law — Fast of Hours

The Rambam's words: "We fast sometimes hours... How? One whose head was occupied with his affairs and busy with his needs and didn't eat until midday or until nine hours, reconsidered to fast the hours remaining from the day — he fasts those hours and prays Aneinu in them, for he accepted the fast before the hours of the fast."

Simple Meaning

A person who was occupied and didn't eat until midday or nine hours, and he now decides to accept a fast for the rest of the day — this is called a "fast of hours." He may say Aneinu, because he accepted the fast before the hours he's fasting.

Novel Points

- The Rambam doesn't bring this for a trouble that happened — just a person who didn't eat and decides to sanctify it as a fast. This is an innovation that a fast of hours works even without a specific trouble.

- **"Hours" doesn't mean until a certain time, but from a certain time** — the rest of the day. One can begin in the middle of the day, and from then until the end of the day is a fast.

Law — Fast of Hours Even After Eating

The Rambam's words: "And so even if he ate and drank and afterwards returned to fast the rest of the day — this is a fast of hours."

Simple Meaning

Even if the person already ate and drank, and afterwards he decides to fast the rest of the day — it's called a fast of hours.

Novel Points

- **Dispute between Rambam and Raavad:** The Raavad disagrees and says "it's nothing" — what kind of fast is this if he already ate? The Raavad agrees that when he didn't eat anyway (he was occupied) and he sanctifies it for a fast, it's valid. But when he already actually ate — the Raavad says it's nothing.

- **Fast without a trouble:** The Rambam gives no "back story" of a trouble — just so an individual can make a fast. One shouldn't ask questions of repentance on all details of laws of fasts — the laws don't work such that every detail must fit with the repentance framework.

Law — Conduct on a Fast: Not to Be in Joy

The Rambam's words: "Anyone who is in a fast, whether fasting for his trouble or for his dream, whether fasting with the community for their trouble — he should not conduct himself with pleasures, and not be lightheaded, and not be happy and good-hearted, but worried and mourning, as the matter

that is said 'why should a living man complain, a man for his sins.'"

Simple Meaning

A person who fasts — whether an individual fast or a communal fast — may not indulge himself, not be lightheaded, not be happy and good-hearted. He should be worried and mourning, thinking about his sins.

Novel Points

- **Difference between "lightheaded" and "happy and good-hearted":** "Lightheaded" means a greater level of frivolity — playing games, idle things. "Happy and good-hearted" means just to be cheerful. Both are forbidden on a fast.

- **The verse "why should a living man complain, a man for his sins":** The Rambam brought this same verse in Laws of Repentance to prove that a person has free choice — "from the mouth of the Most High do not come evils and good," so you shouldn't complain, but think about stopping sinning. Here he brings it nicely: the entire purpose of a fast is to awaken oneself for sins. If one is lightheaded, one has accomplished nothing from the fast.

- **Practical difference:** There's a custom that because it's hard to fast, one goes to sleep or passes the day. According to the Rambam this is backwards — the main thing of a fast is to pray and be in a certain mood of regret.

[Digression: The Shelah says that if the person will come to anger through the fast, anger is even worse — anger is itself a sin. So one must weigh — the Rambam certainly doesn't mean sadness and anger, but worry and regret.]

[Digression: Rabbi Elimelech said that the Men of the Great Assembly wouldn't have instituted fasts for today's generations. A story is told of a Lubavitcher who danced on Tisha B'Av, because "on Tisha B'Av the Almighty is also there." This is a whole different way — the Rambam gives the way of repentance through being drawn in, not through joy.]

Law — Tasting Food on a Fast

The Rambam's words: "And it's permitted to taste the dish, even up to a quarter [log], provided he doesn't swallow, but tastes and spits out."

Simple Meaning

On a fast one may taste a dish — even up to a quarter [log] in the mouth — to see if it tastes good, but one may not swallow it, only taste and spit out.

Law — Forgot and Ate: Completes His Fast

The Rambam's words: "Forgot and ate — he completes his fast."

Simple Meaning

If a person forgot he's fasting and ate, he should continue completing his fast. He still says Aneinu.

Novel Points

- **"Completes his fast" means everything:** What happened by mistake is as if nothing happened. He doesn't need to make another day. "Completes his fast" means he continues as normal.

- **Connection to tasting food:** The Rambam places "forgot and ate" right after "tasting food" intentionally. Perhaps

"forgot and ate" means he forgot and tasted something (not a whole meal). If he actually ate a proper meal, it could be that other poskim would say differently.

Law — Individual Who Fasted and the Sick Person Recovered / The Trouble Passed

The Rambam's words: "An individual who fasted for a sick person and he recovered, for a trouble and it passed — he completes his fast."

Simple Meaning

An individual who began fasting for a sick person, and the sick person became healthy, or for a trouble that went away — he must complete the fast.

Novel Points

- The reason is because he made a **vow** to fast, and the vow doesn't go away when the reason falls away.

- **Rashi (Ta'anit 12b)** brings a reasoning: if he would stop when it succeeded, it would look like he made a **condition with the Creator** — like **Choni HaMe'agel** who said "I'm not leaving this circle unless..." — and this is not proper.

Law — One Who Goes from a Place That Fasts to a Place That Doesn't Fast (and vice versa)

The Rambam's words: "One who goes from a place that fasts to a place that doesn't fast — he fasts and completes. The stringencies of the place he left and the stringencies of the place he went to. One who goes from a place that doesn't fast to a place that fasts — he fasts with them."

Simple Meaning

We take on both stringencies — from where he left and from where he arrived. If he comes from a place where they fast, he must finish. If he comes to a place where they fast, he must join them.

Novel Points

- This is parallel to other laws of **custom of the place** (like work on erev Pesach).

- The foundation of fasting with the community is **"anyone who afflicts himself with the community"** — there's a matter of afflicting oneself with the community.

Law — Forgot and Ate: Should Not Show Himself Before Them

The Rambam's words: "Forgot and ate — he should not show himself before them."

Simple Meaning

If someone forgot or didn't know that they're fasting, and he ate — he shouldn't continue eating in public, he shouldn't show himself satiated before them.

Novel Points

- Everyone is thin and pale and weak, he shouldn't come around like a nice satiated Jew.

- This also applies to someone who **eats because he must** (like a sick person) — he also shouldn't go around. **He should not show himself before them.**

- This is a rule of **proper conduct**.

Law — Community That Rains Fell: Difference Between Before Midday and After Midday

The Rambam's words: "A community that fasted for rains — if before midday [rains fell] they don't complete the fast, but eat and drink and gather and recite the Great Hallel. For we don't say the Great Hallel except with a satiated soul and a full belly. If after midday — they complete."

Simple Meaning

If rains came before midday, we stop fasting, we eat, we gather, we say the Great Hallel. After midday — we complete.

Novel Points

1) Great Hallel with a satiated soul:

The rule that we say the Great Hallel only with a satiated soul and a full belly is applied: therefore we must first eat and then say the Great Hallel. **"Soul"** here means the **body** (animal soul), not the soul.

2) Question on Great Hallel Shabbat morning:

Jews who say the Great Hallel Shabbat morning (Pesukei D'Zimra), when we're not yet satiated — how does this fit? Answers: (a) We can say it in the afternoon after the cholent; (b) tzaddikim said that we become satiated **from the Great Hallel itself**; (c) at the Pesach Seder we say it at the end of the Seder when we're already indeed satiated.

3) "Gives bread to all flesh":

In the Great Hallel it says "gives bread to all flesh," which fits specifically to rains. **Rashi** brings this.

4) Reason for completing after midday:

Most of the day passed in holiness — "holiness" here means **separation**, separated from physicality. From this we see that a **fast is not just a matter of repentance**, it's also **a level in itself** — an important thing that he separated himself from physicality for a day. Because we sit in the Beit Midrash, we pray, we learn — it's a shame to throw it away.

Law — Trouble That Passed (Not Rains): Before Midday / After Midday

The Rambam's words: "For a trouble that passed, for a decree that was nullified — if before midday they don't complete, if after midday they complete." (But the Great Hallel is not mentioned for a trouble.)

Novel Points

1) Great Hallel only for rains?

The Rambam mentions the Great Hallel only for rains, not for other troubles. Is the Great Hallel a law specifically for rains?

2) The Raavad's approach:

The **Raavad** disagrees with the Rambam. The Raavad argues that **even a communal fast for a regular trouble we must indeed complete**, and the law of "they don't complete" is **only an exception for rains**. The Raavad's reasoning: **"for there is no trouble that completely passes except the trouble of rains which is for its time"** — there's no such thing as a trouble that goes away in one minute. A decree goes away? The trauma remains, the king can still reconsider. The **only** trouble that truly goes away in a moment is **rains** — when it starts raining, the trouble is truly over.

[Digression: Saying the entire Tehillim at once]

1) What is the source to say the entire Tehillim at once?

This is a **strange custom** — because Tehillim is a **book of prayers** (a siddur written by King David), where each chapter has its specific purpose: "for Shabbat say this, for trouble say this, for thanksgiving say that." To say everything at once is like saying the **entire siddur** every day — which no one does.

2) Difference between learning Tehillim and saying Tehillim:

When we learn Tehillim as a part of Torah (like we learn the Book of Shmuel), it's learning. But when we **say** Tehillim as prayer, we must say what **fits for the situation**.

3) Question from "one who says Hallel every day":

We may not say Hallel every day. What about someone who says the entire Tehillim every day — he's saying Hallel (chapters 113-118) every day!

4) Defense of the custom:

(a) A person can't concentrate, but when he says the entire Tehillim, he has **a few moments** when he catches on; (b) just as the Rambam says **"the Holy One Blessed be He wanted to give merit to Israel therefore He gave them much Torah and mitzvot"** — something will hit for you; (c) **R' Nachman** said to say **ten chapters** (not all).

5) A **"new stringency" is suggested (half in jest)**: One should say only **one verse or two or three** that fits for the situation — then the Almighty hears.

Law 17 — Order of the Day of a Communal Fast: Examining the Deeds of the City's People

The Rambam's words: "On every fast day that is decreed upon the community because of trouble, the Beit Din and the elders sit in the synagogue, examining the deeds of the city's people from after Shacharit prayer until midday. They remove the stumbling blocks of transgressions, and warn and expound and investigate regarding those who commit violence and transgressions and those who use force, and separate them and humble them. And similar matters. From midday to evening — a quarter of the day they read the blessings and curses in the Torah... and conclude with a prophet with rebukes regarding the trouble. And the last quarter of the day they pray Minchah, supplicate and cry out and confess according to their ability."

Simple Meaning

The Rambam describes the order of the day of a communal fast in three parts: (1) From Shacharit until midday — Beit Din sits in the synagogue and examines the deeds of the city's people, removes stumbling blocks, punishes those who commit violence and those who use force; (2) A quarter day — we read blessings and curses from the Torah (rebuks — Bechukotai or Ki Tavo) and haftarah with a prophet with rebukes fitting to the trouble; (3) The last quarter — Minchah, supplications, outcry, and confession "according to their ability."

Novel Points and Explanations

1) A fast is not just fasting — it's a process of fixing deeds:

The Rambam shows here that a communal fast is not just starving and praying. It's a **beginning of soul-searching and fixing deeds** — we seek out what's bad in the city, we remove stumbling blocks, we stop those who transgress. This fits with the foundation of chapter 1 that a trouble is not chance but a call to repentance.

2) "After Shacharit prayer" — vatikin, not praying late:

"Shacharit prayer" means praying like vatikin (early in the morning), not like someone who prays late. With this we have a good **six hours** from Shacharit until midday to sit in the synagogue and examine.

3) The synagogue is used for an unusual purpose:

Usually we use a synagogue only for praying. Here it's transformed into a **gathering place** where Beit Din sits,

Law 17 (continued) — Order of the Day of a Communal Fast: Examining the Deeds of the City's People

3) The synagogue is used for an unusual purpose:

Usually we use a synagogue only for praying. Here it's transformed into a **gathering place** where Beit Din sits, we inquire what's going on in the streets, we call in people — this is a special conduct for a fast.

4) "Those who commit violence" vs. "those who use force" — two types:

Those who commit violence are people who steal from others or cause transgressions — for them we **"separate them"** (we remove them from their transgressions). Those who use force are just strong-arm types, strong people who trample on the heads of the holy nation — for them we **"humble them"** (we put them in excommunication or we shame them, we break their pride). This fits with the story of **the people of Nineveh** where they returned stolen property — as it says in the Mishnah.

5) "Blessings and curses in the Torah" — what does it mean?

"Blessings and curses" doesn't mean Parashat Nitzavim with "blessings and curses," but it means **the rebuke** — Bechukotai or Ki Tavo. The verse "My son, do not despise the discipline of Hashem and do not loathe His rebuke" is brought as a foundation — we should take rebuke seriously, not despise it or be bored by it.

6) Haftarah regarding the trouble:

We conclude with a prophet with rebukes that fit the specific trouble — if drought, a verse about drought; if plague, a verse about plague.

7) "According to their ability" — no fixed text:

For the last quarter day — supplications, outcry, confession — the Rambam says "according to their ability," which means **there's no fixed text**, but each person supplicates and confesses according to what he understands and can.

8) The division of three quarters — a rule in the order of the day:

- **Two quarters (half a day)** — practical: examining the city's deeds, fixing, separating those who transgress.

- **One quarter** — learning: Torah reading, blessings and curses, haftarah — we learn Torah on topics, we understand better.

- **One quarter** — praying: Minchah, supplications, confession.

This means, **half practical, and half "for Hashem"** (half learning, half praying). This is a remarkable proportion — only a quarter praying, but half a day practical fixing.

9) Why we don't conduct ourselves this way nowadays:

Our custom is not to fulfill this order of examining the city's deeds. The reason: (a) There must be a **Beit Din with power and respect** — a Beit Din that has control over the community, not just a rabbi who calls someone over. (b) **"Go out in the example of the judgment of Israel"** — the Jew must first examine his own deeds before he waits for Beit Din. (c) We understood that the order in the Mishnah is perhaps only for fasting for rain, but we conduct ourselves at all fasts with praying and "seek Hashem when He is found" — more than with the practical order.

10) Lesson for an individual — how one can apply this order:

Even without a Beit Din, an individual can learn from this order: if someone accepts a fast (or a fast from speech, or in the holy days), he should **half the time learn and understand** (soul-searching, planning how to become better), and a part pray.

11) Criticism of the situation nowadays:

We are stringent in fasts (we fast strictly), but **the main matter — fixing deeds — we don't bring**. Even Yom Kippur — we mention "so that we cease from oppression of our hands" in Ne'ilah, but it takes half a second. The Rambam's order demands that we should **seriously give time** to practical fixing, not just formal prayers.

With this concludes Chapter 1 of Laws of Fasts.

Summary of Main Themes from Chapter 1

The Nature of Fasting According to the Rambam

1) Fasting is a means, not an end:

The Rambam emphasizes throughout that fasting itself is not the goal. The goal is **repentance and fixing one's deeds**. Fasting is from "ways of repentance" (darchei teshuvah) — a path that leads to repentance, not repentance itself.

2) The mitzvah is crying out, not suffering:

The Torah-level mitzvah is **to cry out and sound trumpets** — to awaken the community to recognize that troubles come from their deeds. Fasting was added rabbinically as a tool to enhance this awakening.

3) Troubles are not random:

The fundamental principle: saying troubles are "keri" (chance/random) is a "way of cruelty." Not because it denies God's existence, but because it denies the **connection between our deeds and what happens to us**. Even saying "God did it but we don't know why" misses the point — we must recognize our deeds caused it and we must change.

4) Individual providence through repentance:

The Rambam's deep concept: by default, the world operates under "possible nature" — a world of chances. Through repentance and proper conduct, a person exits "from the

category of chance" and merits individual providence. The purpose of fasting and outcry is to move from the world of chance to the world of providence.

The Communal Aspect

1) Fasting is primarily communal:

Although individuals can fast, the main structure of the mitzvah is communal. The Beit Din decrees, the community gathers, we blow trumpets publicly. This is not just individual soul-searching but a communal awakening.

2) The order of a fast day:

The Rambam's description of a proper fast day is revolutionary:

- **Half the day:** Practical examination and fixing — Beit Din examines deeds, removes stumbling blocks, stops wrongdoers

- **Quarter day:** Learning — reading Torah portions of rebuke, understanding the connection between deeds and troubles

- **Quarter day:** Prayer — Minchah, supplications, confession

Only 25% is formal prayer! The emphasis is on practical change.

3) We don't follow this order today:

The Rambam's ideal order is not practiced today, primarily because:

- We lack a Beit Din with real authority

- The communal structure has changed

- We've emphasized the prayer aspect over the practical fixing aspect

This is presented as a deficiency in our current practice.

Specific Laws and Principles

1) When we fast:

- Not on Shabbat or Yom Tov (except acute danger)

- Not beginning on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, Purim, Chol HaMoed (but if the series already started, we continue)

- Monday-Thursday-Monday pattern, repeated until the trouble passes

- Week after week — not just once

2) Who fasts:

- Not pregnant women, nursing women, or children (for communal fasts for troubles)

- Individuals may fast for their personal troubles (sick relative, etc.)

3) How we fast:

- May eat at night until dawn (unless one slept)

- Must accept the fast (after Minchah for next day)

- Must be in a mood of worry and contemplation, not joy or frivolity

- The point is awakening, not suffering

4) Special cases:

- Fast for a dream: to awaken to repentance (even on Shabbat, but then must fast another day)

- Fast of hours: accepting a fast mid-day for the remaining hours

- If one forgot and ate: continues the fast

Philosophical Foundations

1) Chance vs. Providence:

The Rambam's revolutionary interpretation of "keri" (walking with God in randomness):

- Not denying God's existence
- But denying the connection between our deeds and consequences
- Living in a world of "possible nature" without taking responsibility
- The opposite of "way of cruelty" is recognizing cause and effect and changing

2) The purpose of troubles:

Troubles come to awaken us. Not as arbitrary punishment, but as natural consequences that accumulate until they become unbearable. The purpose is "so that you will return" — to recognize the pattern and change course.

3) Prayer vs. Action:

The Rambam's emphasis is not on asking God to change His mind, but on **people changing themselves**. God already wants to help — the question is whether we're in a state to receive that help. Prayer and fasting are tools to change ourselves, not to manipulate God.

4) Individual responsibility within communal framework:

Just as the Sages have authority over the community to decree fasts and enactments, each individual has authority over himself to obligate himself in self-improvement. The power of accepting upon oneself is compared to rabbinic legislation.

Contrasts with Common Understanding

1) Not a segulah:

Fasting is not a mystical remedy or segulah. It's a practical tool for awakening and change.

2) Not about suffering:

The point is not to suffer or to "pay" for sins through pain. It's about creating a day of focus, contemplation, and practical change.

3) Not just prayer:

While prayer is part of a fast day, the Rambam's order shows that examining and fixing actual deeds should take more time than formal prayer.

4) Not passive:

We don't just pray and wait for God to save us. We examine what we did wrong, we fix it, we remove stumbling blocks, we stop wrongdoers. The fast is an active process of change.

Practical Applications for Today

1) Even without the full order:

Even if we can't implement the Rambam's full order (with Beit Din examining the city), individuals can apply the principle: use a fast day for serious soul-searching and practical planning for change, not just formal prayers.

2) The balance of time:

Consider spending more time on actual examination and planning (what am I doing wrong? how will I fix it?) than on reciting prayers.

3) Communal responsibility:

Even if we can't examine others' deeds, we can take responsibility for our own contribution to communal problems.

4) Understanding the purpose:

Approach fasting with the mindset of awakening and change, not just "getting through the day" or fulfilling an obligation.

The Rambam's Unique Approach

1) Systematizing the mitzvah:

The Rambam creates a clear mitzvah-structure where the Gemara and Mishnah were less explicit. He identifies a general Torah-level mitzvah (crying out at troubles) with specific rabbinic applications.

2) Rationalist framework:

Everything has a reason and purpose. Fasting leads to repentance through a psychological process of awakening, not through mystical mechanisms.

3) Emphasis on deed over word:

Consistent with the Rambam's overall approach, the emphasis is on actual change in behavior, not just verbal confession or prayer.

4) Natural law within divine providence:

The world operates by natural law (possible nature, chances), but through our deeds we can merit special providence. This is not contradictory but complementary.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 of Laws of Fasts presents fasting not as an isolated ritual but as part of a comprehensive system of communal and individual awakening. The Rambam transforms what could be seen as mere ascetic practice into a rational, purposeful process of recognizing the connection between our deeds and their consequences, and taking active steps to change.

The gap between the Rambam's ideal (half a day of practical examination and fixing) and our current practice (mostly formal prayers) represents a significant loss. Yet the principles remain applicable: fasting should lead to genuine self-examination, recognition of our role in causing troubles, and concrete plans for change — not just going through the motions of a difficult day.

The philosophical depth — understanding "keri" not as denying God but as denying responsibility, seeing repentance as moving from the world of chance to the world of providence, recognizing that God doesn't need to change but we do — provides a framework for understanding not just fasting but the entire relationship between human action and divine response.

| Full Transcript

Laws of Fasts – Introduction: The Mitzvah of Fasting and Crying Out

General Introduction to the Laws of Fasts

A good year. We are beginning a new tractate, a new section of laws from the Rambam, which is the Laws of Fasts. Yes. And in honor of the new laws, we will mention again with praise the donors of the shiur, Rabbi Yoel, and all other Jews who listen to it, and all those Jews who found it difficult during the

Laws of Sanctification of the New Month, should now return and continue learning. Yes. And we are going out to the world with a shofar. Perhaps with trumpets (chatzotzros)? Perhaps with a shofar? Perhaps we are asking the Almighty that the world should come? Something we are doing. It could be that nowadays, with a microphone, with a recording, we are doing what the shofar should be able to do. The shofar of old was simply what had a loud voice to invite the world. We need to send such a track with such a loud speaker: "Rabbosai, the shiur continues, everyone should gather together and learn."

The Structure of Sefer Zmanim

Anyway, so let's say the introduction to the Laws of Fasts. The introduction is as follows: We are learning here Sefer Zmanim. Yes, in Sefer Zmanim how many sections of laws are there? How many are there altogether? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Ten different sections of laws. The structure is more or less very logical. That is, it begins with Shabbos, then Yom Kippur, which means, you could say that the first four sections of laws are generally about the cessation of work on Shabbos and cessation of work on Yom Tov. That is, Shabbos has two, Shabbos and Eruvin, then Yom Kippur, which has its own type of cessation plus fasting, and Yom Tov, general laws of the labors of Yom Tov.

Then there are three sections of laws, and they are several mitzvos, but three sections of laws of the specific mitzvos that are relevant to... sorry, two or three, I don't know, ah, let's say three. Specific mitzvos that have to do with holidays: the mitzvos of chametz and matzah, which is the Laws of Pesach; shofar and sukkah and lulav, which are all the laws that are relevant to the month of Tishrei, yes, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkos. Yom Kippur already stood in Shevitas Asor, right? Then Shekalim, because that is in the month of Adar, by the way, it's a bit more relevant to the support of the Beis HaMikdash, but one can understand that it's also dependent on time, every year, yes. Then there is Kiddush HaChodesh, that's already more general, but the topic of sanctifying the month is certainly dependent on time. Also, it could be it's connected to Shekalim, because Nissan is "hachodesh hazeh lachem." Anyways.

The Place of the Laws of Fasts in Sefer Zmanim

Now there remains, and we also see it in the Mishnah in Seder Moed, and also in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, anyone who is going to write the order of the day, the order of the year for a Jew, he needs to write two more things: Chanukah and Purim. Okay, that's the last section of laws, very simple, that's rabbinic holidays comes last. Besides that there are also fasts. There are fasts that come every year, Tishah B'Av, all the other four fasts, and other fasts that we will see, which at least belong to Seder Moed, there are times of the year when we fast. This is apparently the main reason why the Laws of Fasts stand here, because this is another time. On the calendar one must write "fast." When someone makes a calendar, he must write when is Pesach, when is Yom Kippur, he must also write when we fast. These are simple matters, yes?

The Difficulty: Fasts Are Not Explicit in the Torah

But what? But here there is a somewhat interesting thing, because a fast is not, simply all the fasts that we have, except for Yom Kippur which we already learned is a cessation from eating, right, but it's not the Laws of Fasts. It's not, it certainly doesn't say in the Torah that one should fast on Tishah B'Av, it was established later, by the prophets. And even other fasts

apparently, as in Tractate Taanis a very large portion speaks about fasts for rain, that is we fast about the trouble that it doesn't rain, also it wasn't clear which mitzvah it is, whether it's a mitzvah in the Torah, it's certainly not a fixed time, it depends on the reality whether it rains or it doesn't rain. So it's somewhat weak, it doesn't stand properly in the Gemara and the Mishnah that this is a mitzvah and so forth.

The Rambam's Great Innovation: A General Mitzvah of Fasting and Crying Out

But the holy Rambam, by whom everything had to fit, there had to be a mitzvah of fasting, otherwise how would he write it? So the Rambam came with a great innovation. I mean by the way, there are sources for this, but the structure is the Rambam's innovation as far as I know.

The Words of the Rambam in the Introduction

So the Rambam said as follows: Let's learn the introduction to the mitzvah of fasting. Yes, so says the Rambam in the chapter, it goes like this: Laws of Fasts. Says the Rambam, **"One positive commandment, and it is to fast and cry out before Hashem at any time of great trouble that comes upon the community"**. When there comes a great trouble, a special trouble it seems here, a great trouble that comes upon the community, the mitzvah is to do two things: fast and cry out. So the Rambam includes it, the Laws of Fasts is a part of this crying out and fasting.

The Contradiction: Fasting Is Rabbinic, Not Biblical

So simply, that is, here it says that there is a mitzvah. Soon we will see inside how the mitzvah stands, how it stands at all. The Rambam apparently said inside that fasting is rabbinic. Biblically it is perhaps to cry out and blow, to blow trumpets, which he doesn't say at all in the chapter. One always needs to know how much one can deduce from the chapter.

The General Mitzvah: Great Trouble Upon the Community

But the idea is, there is a general mitzvah, that when a trouble comes, not upon an individual - an individual is not a biblical mitzvah - also not that there is a small trouble. One needs to know what this means. In other words, it could be, a small trouble is what we pray for every day, "heal us," "bless for us," it's all... That's not a trouble. Great trouble means something extraordinary that is not the normal order of the world so to speak. Then there is a mitzvah from the Torah, a general mitzvah, to fast, to cry out, let's say to pray.

How the Fixed Fasts Fulfill the Biblical Mitzvah

In other words, the Rambam will understand that what we have fixed fasts, or the fasts that the Beis Din decrees because of the rains, we are fulfilling the biblical mitzvah. It's not that the Torah states an obligation. It's an interesting type of obligation, because you see that the Rambam is very careful not to have such types of things. That is, there are things like punishing whoever sins, I don't know what, the Beis Din will impose the death penalty. Here is a bit more than that, that the Beis Din will also establish that today is a fast. That today is a fast is not biblical, but that we define it as a great trouble, then that's... and the laws also.

The Difference Between the Rambam and the Ramban Regarding Prayer in Time of Trouble

But even more than that, the Rambam is usually with his mitzvos, that he shouldn't... generally that he should be a good person. That's not a mitzvah, that's a reason for the mitzvah. Ah, very good. That's what I thought, because the mitzvah of

fasting and crying out the Rambam derives from the verse about blowing shofar and trumpets. But that a person should turn to the Almighty in a difficult time, apparently it's a part of prayer, a part of service of Hashem, a part of teshuvah, the Rambam mentioned that... but it's a part of... but now it has no rules, now it doesn't have something that Beis Din establishes. Every day when a person is in trouble he prays.

Although the Rambam doesn't hold like the Ramban that when it's a time of trouble prayer is a greater obligation. No, the Rambam holds yes, that is the obligation. People always say that it's a dispute between Rambam and Ramban, which is not true. The Rambam has an extra mitzvah of prayer. But this is not the regular prayer, this is an extra type of gathering, and the Beis Din must establish it. Apparently, the obligation only comes after or when it has the rules that it should have already rained.

That it depends on you yourself, when you feel in trouble you should turn to the Almighty, that is something from the Ramban. I'm speaking now about a community. Eh, I say, could be. Yes, so I mean to say, so the Rambam, what the laws that he's going to say are yes something like an obligation, an order, a conduct, on that day one should gather together and fast and the like.

The Question: When Is the Fulfillment Biblical?

But altogether apparently it's rabbinic, it's not explicitly stated inside, but there is some mitzvah dependent on the Torah. It's not clear when is the situation where the fulfillment is actually biblical? Never apparently. I don't think we can imagine such a type of thing, for example Chanukah and Purim the Rambam doesn't say it's biblical. But that we thank the Almighty for things that happen, for joyful things, is probably yes. Even, it says in the Torah several times, I mean, I thank the Almighty. A part of prayer has thanksgiving, yes? The Ramban also said that one should give thanks, and this we do every day.

The Rambam's Approach: Rabbinic Laws Are Not an "Explanation" of the Torah

But the Ramban wants the mitzvah to have clear parameters. That we see that prayer, a part of prayer is thanking for good things that the Almighty does for us, is a part of a law in prayer. That the Ramban takes it this way by Megillah and Chanukah. For this he has by the Laws of Fasts he at least found that there is one part, the fast for rain has yes, as the Sages... Meaning, the Rambam wants to make that the laws of the Rabbis are an explanation of the mitzvah.

No, he never wants to make that. Never. Never. The Rambam never says that the Rabbis develop the Torah. Torah she'baal peh, that's what the Rambam says are the biblical laws of the Torah. But the Rambam says here clearly, in the biblical laws it says to fast. That is rabbinic. It's a contradiction even from what it says in the introduction, but he says clearly that from the words of the scribes is this fasting. So, in chapter 1 it can be seen, it's stated explicitly.

Discussion: Fast for Rain – Biblical or Rabbinic?

And the fast for rain is also rabbinic, you think? And the... That I say, that's very interesting, it's not clear how we connect this. It's biblical that one should in time of trouble, but... It's very different, for example, from saying that pri eitz hadar and all the laws of esrog are an explanation of that. It's not an explanation. Here this is a fast of a name, not an explanation of the mitzvah of fasting and crying out. It's an explanation

certainly, but the question is whether what you fast now today, are you doing that biblical mitzvah.

The 17th of Cheshvan, I don't know, a fast was decreed. The definition of the fast of the 17th of Cheshvan is the definition of the Beis Din at that time that decreed a fast. Why did they decree? Because there is such a mitzvah to decree. Perhaps it means exactly that, perhaps it's like a mitzvah upon the Beis Din to decree, perhaps one needs to learn it that way. I don't know.

The Communal Nature of the Mitzvah

Apparently, blowing is always such a strong communal matter. By year that stands in the Beis Din below, or the Beis Din below, or the Kohen, or the king. A communal fast, a communal fast is something that the community does. Certainly every individual must do it, but certainly the Rambam doesn't say it like or Rashi, a communal fast. He says yes, to fast at any time of trouble upon the community. But not as he says Tishah B'Av on the perhaps, he doesn't say it as biblical.

Because that I say, it's certain that Tishah B'Av in general, we don't know how it is the courtyards, but it's certain that in general, anytime, even when it is yes a trouble and the Beis Din decrees, one doesn't need to say for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of the rabbis. Perhaps the Beis Din, I think, perhaps the Beis Din fulfilled the mitzvah, because fasting means

Laws of Fasts – Structure of the Book and the Mitzvah to Cry Out and Blow Trumpets

Structure of the Laws of Fasts in the Rambam

Speaker 1: The definition of the fast of the 17th of Cheshvan is the definition of the Beis Din at that time that decreed a fast. Why did they decree? Because there is such a mitzvah to decree. Perhaps it means, perhaps exactly that, perhaps it's like a mitzvah upon the Beis Din to decree, perhaps one needs to learn it that way. I don't know.

Apparently, blowing is always such a strong communal matter. A communal fast. A communal fast is something that the community does. Certainly every individual must do it, but certainly the Rambam doesn't say it like or initially a communal fast. He says yes, to fast at any time of trouble upon the community. But when he says Tishah B'Av that one must fast, he doesn't say it as biblical. Because that I say.

It's certain that Tishah B'Av in general, we don't know how it is the courtyards, but it's certain that in general, anytime, even when it is yes a trouble and the Beis Din decrees, one doesn't need to say for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of our rabbis. Perhaps the Beis Din? I think, perhaps the Beis Din fulfilled the mitzvah? Because fasting means that the Beis Din should make a fast, then the people fulfill the... Just as the Beis Din, there is a mitzvah.

The Rambam says that there is a mitzvah of "asu mishmerres lemishmartee," yes? Some mitzvah, but the Rambam says that there is a right, yes? The Beis Din, for this one makes a fence for the Torah, because it says simply "mishmerres lemishmartee." And about this each watch a thirty? No, there is a mitzvah upon the Beis Din to make enactments, then what we fulfill with enactments, should fulfill with the rabbis.

And the language of the Rambam is difficult, it says, to fast and cry out before Hashem, it seems like we're speaking here

already about the fast itself, not the establishing. To cry out before Hashem, because I have a problem, I say that.

Speaker 2: No, I understand, I say, okay. Let's go learn inside, and perhaps it will be a bit clearer. Let's see.

Order of the Chapters

Speaker 2: And in Sefer HaMitzvos the Rambam yes brought the verse. The verses are... we'll already see the verse. The Rambam is accustomed in the book of chapters. Never. The chapters of laws never have any verses. And the list at the beginning of Mishneh Torah stood in verses, which we call the count of the mitzvos at the end. So it stands in the book. But inside, always the verse stands inside in the laws, one doesn't need to repeat it also by the chapter.

In short, let's learn the Rambam. Ah, let's say, the order roughly, the structure of the laws will be, the first chapter the Rambam says the mitzvah of crying out, and then the rabbinic mitzvah apparently of fasting, the general laws of fasting. As the chapter says Laws of Fasting and Crying Out, and he divides crying out and blowing as one thing, and the laws of fasting as a next thing.

Then in chapter 2 the Rambam says what the troubles are, and what we fast for, great trouble. One needs to know what is the law of a great trouble.

Then, in chapters 3 and 4 it speaks about the laws of fasting for rain, which is one of the great troubles. There is a whole order when we fast for the rains.

And in chapter 5 it speaks about the fasts...

Speaker 1: You say very well that the fast for rain is what makes it most as Sefer Zmanim, yes? Could be also the other communal fast, okay.

Speaker 2: Yes, certainly, because chapter 5, which is the fast...

Speaker 1: You're saying from the biblical this is the only one. I don't know if this is more rabbinic or biblical. It's more or less fixed in the sense that one still needs to establish. This is already fixed because every year there is a custom to fast. But I don't know.

Speaker 2: Anyways, yes, we'll speak more about this, we'll speak about the fast for rain, I have more ideas about this. In any case, 3 and 4, both chapters 3 and 4 speak about this, about the fast for rain. And chapter 5 says the fasts that we know, the rabbinic fasts, the five fasts, four, plus Taanis Esther which is a custom.

Law 1 – The Positive Commandment to Cry Out and Blow Trumpets

Speaker 2: Yes, says the holy Rambam law 1, a positive commandment, yes?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: Says the Rambam as follows: "**A positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and blow trumpets**". To cry out and blow trumpets, and whistle or blow with trumpets. When?

Interesting, the word "leharua," sometimes it means teruah, many times. Usually it says "vehariosem," yes? Sometimes it means with shofar, sometimes with trumpets. What does the word teruah mean? It's the same word as tekiah. Machanua, or geis.

Speaker 1: Yes. It's a noise, no? Moshe Rabbeinu sees it's a noise, no? When we make the noise, no? Noise I mean, yes?

The Rambam's Explanation in Ta'anit: Darchei Teshuva, Not Tefillah

Halacha 1 (Continuation) — The Matter of Ze'akah and Teruah

The Distinction Between Tekiah and Teruah

That is, that there is for practical things, such as lemasa hamachanot (for the journeys of the camp) one needs to blow shofar, the Almighty says, why do you need to have chatzotzrot (trumpets)? Make trumpets. Why? You need to have it for this and for that. And have the specific thing, **vehareiotem bachatzotzrot** (and you shall sound with the trumpets), that is the mitzvah. And that is stated on the words "**ki tavo milchama**" (when you go to war). I don't know.

And the Rambam is not the simple meaning in the verse. The Rambam wants to show here why one fasts, basically. And this begins from this verse.

And now the Rambam comes with a very famous piece. But this is interesting, that teruah is synonymous with ze'akah, crying out with a shofar or crying out in prayer. Both things happen. And not only that, there are places where it says "matri'in," and the Gemara is not certain whether matri'in means with trumpets or simply in prayer. It seems that this is or simply with a warning, whatever. Yes.

And by the way, it may be that this is also different from tekiah, because it says there indeed that "**uvehakhil et hakahal titke'u velo tariu**" (when assembling the congregation, you shall blow but not sound). It may be that if one uses the shofar only practically, then one is toke'a. But if one uses it also for the matter of prayer, then the teruah is more... If there is a distinction between the two sounds, tekiah and teruah, which is the matter of Rosh Hashanah, it may be that the teruah, therefore it says in all the hints in the books that teruah hints more at the attribute of judgment, and tekiah is more the attribute of kindness, this has to do with this.

That in the time of joy, he also sees in that verse it says explicitly, "**uvyom simchatchem utkatem**" (and on your days of joy you shall blow), not vehareiotem. It may be that tekiah is more a manner of joy, and hariu... There is hariu which is indeed joy. I can't say that... There are verses. Teruah has a matter of quite nothing, and tekiah has a matter of joy. Yes, according to that matter. So it's interesting.

Shabbat Rosh Hashanah — "Zichron Teruah"

So it may be that when Rosh Hashanah is Shabbat, then one is certainly in teruah. That is, the crying out is indeed the same thing as shofar. The davening is then the substitute for shofar. Many Jews have already grasped this. There is no contradiction. It means on the contrary, you see indeed that one blows shofar on Rosh Hashanah it always goes with prayers. One says Malchuyot Zichronot Shofarot. Shabbat is only the teruah, but it is indeed also a teruah.

So it is the "zichron," he means the "**venizkhartem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem**" (and you shall be remembered before Hashem your God). "**Zichron teruah**" (remembrance of sounding), this means that the essence of the teruah is indeed the "**venizkhartem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem**". When one cannot do it with a shofar because of the rabbinic decree, one does the other part of "venizkhartem."

Halacha 2 — ***"Davar Zeh Midarchei Hateshuva Hu"*** (This Matter is From the Ways of Repentance)

The Rambam's Bombshell Innovation

Now the Rambam comes and he says an innovation, a bombshell innovation, that no one knows the meaning of the Chumash. Most people are completely confused what it means. And I don't know if I will have the nerves to explain what it means here.

But the Rambam comes and he says a ta'am hamitzvah (reason for the commandment) like... And it's apparently a bit more than the ta'am hamitzvah. More than the ta'am hamitzvah. He gives the essence of the mitzvah. Right, this helps for the Rambam to explain where the ze'akah comes into the whole topic of ta'anit, where it comes in, what it means, what is the essence of the ze'akah.

The Rambam says thus: The Rambam says, what is the matter of the ze'akah? The Rambam says thus, the ze'akah is not to awaken Heaven. Heaven is already awake.

The Simple Meaning in Ta'anit

Let's say however a simple thing, because this will help us understand why the Rambam is not the correct simple meaning, and one should not do fasts with the Rambam's understanding. No, one should also do the Rambam's understanding, but one must remember that there is another understanding that all other tzaddikim before and after him knew.

Simple meaning, it says in the Torah, "et tzara titpalel" (in time of trouble you shall pray), the Almighty must help. So what is the point of ta'anit? It indeed says in Tanach, and Esther made a fast, why did they fast? They asked the Almighty to help us. Ta'anit helps something for the... There is a trouble, one asks the Almighty. This everyone understands, devarim peshutim me'od (very simple things).

The Rambam's Innovation: Ta'anit is Darchei Teshuva, Not Tefillah

The Rambam comes and says, no, not you. Always the purpose is not so that the Almighty should help you. What are you saying? The Almighty always helps. The Almighty doesn't need to change His mind. As it's said, don't say so many times "im yirtzeh Hashem" (if God wills), the Almighty already wills, now you need to will.

Ah, why is there a mitzvah of ta'anit? The Rambam says thus, **"davar zeh midarchei hateshuva hu"** (this matter is from the ways of repentance). It's not something a law in prayer, it's a law in teshuva. It's a part of darchei teshuva. The words "darchei teshuva" we had a few times in Hilchot Teshuva. There are things that are darchei teshuva, which have to do with the way how a person conducts himself in a manner that it should bring him teshuva. Right, very good.

Discussion: What Does "Darchei Teshuva" Mean?

Speaker 1: So what is the derech hateshuva? Or one can say more precisely, or the same thing you're saying just in my way. Darchei teshuva is not the same thing as teshuva. Fasting is not teshuva, as Yoel says, **"kir'u levavechem ve'al bigdeichem"** (rend your hearts and not your garments). It's not a matter of fasting. Fasting is a darchei teshuva, it's a way to teshuva, or you're saying it awakens the people that one needs to change and the like. The teshuva lasts a moment, the darchei teshuva can last whole years.

Speaker 2: Or on the contrary, darchei teshuva lasts a long time, because one indeed must become. The teshuva is the switch, that from now he will no longer do the sin. The switch is not, and not work. Darchei teshuva is the work.

Speaker 1: I'm saying this year on the contrary, that teshuva takes a lot of time. Teshuva means indeed becoming a better person. One can become in one minute a better person, one can plan, but becoming takes two years. But the darchei teshuva is, one wakes up, that one blows shofar today, whatever, he fasts today, he catches himself, gradually he takes upon himself to become better.

Speaker 2: Okay, here there is what you catch yourself there a moment, but until you catch yourself one needs to cry out a lot.

Speaker 1: Yes, fine.

So the darchei teshuva, knowing that the Almighty does everything, is knowledge, knowledge is not dependent on time. One minute, can already speak, the Almighty does everything. But the point is, the darchei teshuva is not teshuva. We should not be teshuva and think that fasting is a matter of teshuva. Darchei hateshuva according to the Rama means a way to awaken to teshuva. Way, as it's simple, it's a way that leads there. You know indeed with darchei hateshuva, it's the way that leads to teshuva.

How It Works: "Yede'u Hakol Shebighlal Ma'aseihem Hara'im Hara Lahem"

So what? How does fasting help with darchei teshuva? This the Rama says that there is the mitzvah, the ma'aseh hamitzvah is that one should cry out and be mari'a, one should cry out and blow shofar. What will this help? Then **yede'u hakol** (everyone will know), indeed every single person will know, **shebighlal ma'aseihem hara'im hara lahem** (that because of their evil deeds, evil came to them).

It's interesting that he has here the word like ra'u hara'im hara lahem, he plays around with the letters of the root hara. **Kakativ** (as it is written), but **vanatotichem hatu eleh** (and your iniquities have turned these away). On what does it stand? On troubles that happened that the sins brought, permitted the blows of judgment.

Vezhu (and this is), the thing that one will, everyone will become aware, know and remember that the troubles brought, the evil deeds brought the troubles. This will cause **ulhasir hatzarot aleihem** (and to remove the troubles from them), because they will know what brought the trouble, and they will understand what will remove the troubles. They will understand that everything lies in their deeds. Our deeds bring, our sin brings troubles, and teshuva will bring removal of the troubles.

Discussion: Who Does the Crying Out?

Speaker 2: But it indeed means that the crying out I want to perhaps be able to say thus: The one who begins the crying out, the one who calls together the people, is generally the tzaddik, not the one who sins. He is indeed the talmid chacham, the beit din, or... They already know. But teshuva however is indeed a thing that is dependent on the heart, one needs to gather together the whole people.

Speaker 1: Dependent on deeds.

Speaker 2: Dependent also dependent on deeds. But I'm saying, the person who is yiz'aku veyariu, he is already a ba'al teshuva, because he is the one who does it.

Speaker 1: Let's understand. Yiz'aku veyariu the Rambam admits. This we said earlier that the Rambam says that the point is not prayer. That the Rambam admits on what the mitzvah is from Moshe to the Almighty. But the Rambam understood... Let's finish... Let's finish...

Halacha 2 (Continuation) — *"Aval Im Lo Yiz'aku Velo Yariu"*** (But If They Do Not Cry Out and Do Not Sound)**

The Rambam's Warning

But **im lo yiz'aku velo yariu** (if they do not cry out and do not sound), when they don't cry out, the Rambam will as the line happened. Then the Rambam explains thus, it indeed becomes difficult here that it will become a question.

Question: What Does Davening Have to Do With Teshuva?

What does davening about a trouble have to do with teshuva? Davening is on the contrary. Many times people think he davens, the Almighty wanted to have mercy even if one doesn't do teshuva. According to the Rambam, this is not the order of prayer of ta'anit. One must specifically daven in a manner that one should make you do teshuva. Simply davening, the Almighty has mercy, it won't help. This is what the Rambam wants to argue here, right?

The Rambam must explain, what is the connection between the two things? Davening means, Master of the Universe, help me, and when I don't daven, perhaps the Almighty won't help. What does this thing have to do with teshuva at all? How does one connect? Do I understand the question?

Speaker 2: But the Rambam didn't mention the word tefillah, only the word ze'akah and yeri'ah.

Fasting for the Community: Crying Out, Repentance, and the Path of Mercy

Halacha 1 (Continued) – The Purpose of Crying Out: Not Prayer Alone, But Repentance

Speaker 1: Yes, but that's what it means. Crying out (ze'akah) is one of the first steps of repentance (teshuva), but for whom does one merit? It's the Almighty, certainly. That's not the question. The Rambam knows, to whom does one say during fasts? "Save, Hashem, Your people Israel." That's not the question. The question is, but what does it have to do with?

The Rambam's Answer: "This Thing is From the Way of the World That Happened to Us"

For this comes the Rambam with a whole piece of Torah. The Rambam explains, says the Rambam, think when one doesn't fast. What is the other option? When one doesn't cry out, what will people think?

They will say, now give a sigh to say, the world is a sad place. "This thing is from the way of the world that happened to us, and this trouble is happenstance and occurred by chance." A trouble happened. It's an accident. A trouble happened.

Says the Rambam, **"This is a path of cruelty."** This is a cruel way. This is like... Why? Why is it a path of cruelty? **"And it causes them to cling to their evil deeds,"** to continue holding on to their evil deeds which originally brought the trouble. **"And the trouble will increase with other troubles,"** and if one doesn't do teshuva, more troubles and more troubles will come.

The Verse: "And You Shall Walk With Me Keri"

"As it is written in the Torah, 'And you shall walk with Me keri and I shall walk with you in the fury of keri.'"

The Rambam translates these words, **"That is to say, when I bring upon you trouble in order that you should repent,"** when I go to bring a trouble, and why do I bring the trouble? In order that one should do teshuva. **"But if you say that it is keri,"** if one goes to say that it's an accident, **"then I will add to you the fury of that keri,"** I will bring more.

A Major Innovation: What Does "Keri" Mean According to the Rambam

So let me say how I translate this Rambam. What the Rambam says is like this, I want to say very differently from what most people think. Most people think that here in this Rambam stands a topic of faith (emunah) and the acts of Hashem (ma'asei Hashem). It's also a topic of faith, but one must know which faith.

There is a fundamental principle of faith that the Almighty is "He who did, does, and will do all deeds," and nothing is by chance in the sense that someone else does it. One must know that the Rambam isn't speaking of that at all. The Rambam doesn't say that one who says it's keri, he doesn't say that it's not the acts of Hashem, he doesn't say that the Almighty doesn't run it. That's not the question at all.

And on the contrary, according to the Rambam, if a person has a trouble, and one awakens oneself, the Almighty made me this trouble, and the Almighty sometimes makes troubles. We don't understand, the Almighty, sometimes He makes troubles? **This is a path of cruelty and causes them to cling to their evil deeds.** Because the Rambam understands that the point is not to understand that the Almighty should be better. That's not the point. The point is why do you have a trouble? Because it came from your evil deeds that caused the trouble.

So if so, you don't need to go further and say everything is from Heaven, which is the same thing as saying keri. Keri means, people have a big mistake, people think that when the Rambam says keri, he means to exclude the Almighty. It was never a question that the Almighty does everything. That's not the topic, even when the Rambam says keri.

The Rambam's Approach to Providence and Keri — How It Relates to the Laws of Fasts

The Concept of "In Order That You Should Repent" — What Does It Mean?

Speaker 1:

Even when the Rambam speaks of providence (hashgacha), it doesn't mean to exclude that the Almighty does it, it means how the conduct of Hashem (hanhagat Hashem) works. If he says that the Almighty does everything, he will go further, he will say, "Well, one must be joyful, one must strengthen oneself," you will get more troubles.

Why will you get more troubles? Not because the Almighty will be more angry at you, simply for the same reasons you would get the trouble. Because the trouble comes for sin in order that you should repent.

Yes, I think that the "in order that you should repent" is a bit too much said. That is, the trouble... I think that the "in order that you should repent" is simply that sometimes when a great trouble comes, a person grasps how bad his deeds are. That is, deeds...

One doesn't need to say, I want to say this as a very important thing, one doesn't even need to say here that the trouble comes

in a miraculous way, as it were. Certainly, the simple meaning is not that. I can say a deeper meaning in this a bit later, but first I would say the simple translation.

A Parable: The Lazy Person and the Creditors

Let's speak of a simple thing. Let's say people conduct themselves, let's say a person is lazy and he doesn't work, okay? He gets a trouble, he has no money, okay? So it says in the Book of Proverbs many times, the trouble.

Now, the problem is that from one day there's not yet a great trouble, today he borrows. It comes once, suddenly, all the creditors come together, it becomes a great trouble. A person grasps that "your deeds, your iniquities have turned these away."

He has here two options. Either he can say that the Almighty did it and it's not my responsibility, it doesn't fit, because he has nothing to do, he only needs to be good with the Almighty, he's already good with the Almighty. Whatever happens, happens. This is a path of cruelty.

If he says, oh, it's mine, it's a lie, how does one say that? By making a situation from it, by saying it's not normal. Today is not just a day like all days when all kinds of things happen. Today is something interesting, one must make a fast on this.

The person gets the message, "Ah, it's about me." What does he do? He stops being lazy, gradually he becomes better. But this is the meaning of "in order that you should repent," do you understand? Because the trouble caused him to grasp how the end of his deeds can be a very bad thing. If not, he will continue to become even worse. So it happens, they will lend him, he will make bankruptcy again. In short, it will become worse. This is the order of things. So I think this is the translation of the Rambam.

Natural Catastrophes — The Ibn Ezra's Approach

Speaker 1:

One must add here... I want to understand, because the Rambam also speaks of things that are nature, as it is nature. And do you know why natural disasters happen? Because people live in places where natural disasters happen. There are always solutions.

The holy Ibn Ezra explains that simply there is a city where the natural way is decreed, as it were, that there should be a trouble there, how does the Almighty save the righteous? He gives them a weather prediction, and therefore they travel away. This is, for example, the way.

A plague comes, there are solutions. This is the translation. This is the... True, a plague can indeed be dependent on people's conduct. Most things, if it's not dependent on people's deeds, what's relevant? Am I simply praying for a miracle? Mitzvot doesn't mean that one prays for a miracle. If it doesn't rain, it seems that something wrong was done.

Discussion: The Interpretation of "Keri" — The Rambam's Innovation

Speaker 1:

Now, one must add here an important thing. First of all, you read very well earlier the other context, the verse of the trumpets, but the verse of "and you shall walk with Me kerī," one must know that the Rambam says that kerī means from the language of chance (mikre). This is the Rambam's interpretation. It's not the simple meaning?

Speaker 2:

What does kerī mean from the language of chance? I don't know. I don't know what the simple meaning is. I have no proof that the Rambam's meaning is the translation. Kerī stands in the Torah as this language? Mikre layla, mikre layla one calls kerī.

Speaker 1:

But I think not, I don't believe that... Mikre layla means a language of chance, an accident happened at night. An accident that happens at night, yes. "He shall not become impure from mikre layla," but I'm not sure that kerī is the language of chance. I think that this is the Rambam's innovation.

Probably indeed about this, what I can indeed say, if I remember, none of the commentators before the Rambam thought that kerī means chance. Let's look at Rashi for example, yes? Let's see what Rashi says. Rashi was such a Jew.

Looking in Rashi

It says like this, kerī, yes? I need to do this, so it should be easier to see. One verse, **"And you shall walk with Me kerī."** What is the translation of kerī? It doesn't say here, and no commentator says what the translation is. Well? **"If you walk with Me kerī."**

Rashi translates, yes, but Rashi doesn't translate that you will believe that it's a chance. Rashi translates that you will conduct yourself in the way of chance in the mitzvot, you will do a mitzva sometimes yes sometimes no. This is Rashi's translation.

And the Rashbam brings that Menachem argued that it's a language of prevention, like **"Precious in the eyes of Hashem is the death of His pious ones,"** he translates that it's yes.

But for example, the Ibn Ezra argues, brings in the name of the many that it's from the language of mighty and victorious, some kind of wickedness.

Speaker 2:

The mighty and victorious is not a contradiction, because the Rambam also didn't say the word chance clearly.

Speaker 1:

One minute, one minute, one minute. There is a dispute, it's not who knows what from the...

Speaker 2:

No, no, no. The Rambam learns that it's from the language of chance, this doesn't agree with the commentators, this is first of all. There was a great dispute among the commentators of the plain meaning, language of difficulty, not the Rambam. The Rambam certainly translates from the language of chance, from the language of temporary.

But even Rashi who translated from the language of temporary, he translated **"you shall walk with Me kerī,"** you will conduct yourself not like "make your Torah fixed," but temporary. You will be... yes, it will happen... sometimes a Jew, sometimes a gentile, sometimes an angel, sometimes a wave. You know what the Almighty says? I will be with you also sometimes good, sometimes bad, something like that.

But although it's not, it's not clear, because **"and I shall walk with you in the fury of kerī"** is very difficult to read according to Rashi's meaning, right? It fits for what the other

commentators say that it's from the language of difficulty and anger. What comes in a fury of keri?

The Rambam's Foundation: "Given to Chances" — The World by Default

Speaker 2:

That is, the Rambam came with an innovation that there is a thing called chance. Chance means, so I want to say what I think.

The Rambam explained in many places, in different places on the topic of providence, the Rambam explained, and so the Rambam accepted the simple meaning. By default the world is given to chances. There is a natural order, it's certainly with providence, it's all the acts of Hashem, so the Almighty made that the nature is. It doesn't mean that there is some other power besides God, yes?

But as the Rambam explains in the Laws of Repentance, there is a nature, a thing, and the nature of this world, the Rambam calls it the nature of possibility. Sometimes there is a storm, sometimes not, sometimes there is this, sometimes there is that. This is the nature, the nature of this world. And there is not necessarily a plan why it is so.

So says the Rambam, and about this says the Rambam, as is known that animals, or even the simple... People by default don't have providence. It doesn't mean that the Almighty doesn't run it, it only means that it runs without a plan, without reason, without intention.

Individual Providence on the Righteous

Now, says the Rambam, what it says in the Torah that there is individual providence on the righteous, says the Rambam, this means, this is a special innovation. If one is a righteous person and he has a divine abundance that comes through his intellect, however, that's supposed to work, then he has a special providence.

And therefore says the Rambam, that when one punishes a person, one doesn't need to punish him directly, one only needs to leave him to chances, and the Almighty removes His providence. As it says, the Rambam's greatest proof is a verse in Parashat Ha'azinu, where it says **"and I shall hide My face from them and they shall be for consumption."** It's not only Rabbeinu, only Rabbeinu, only Rabbeinu, from the ways of Hashem, he has no providence.

The Great Innovation — Troubles Indeed Come by Chance

So comes out a very great innovation. People think, that is, I want to say further the divine simple Jews who unfortunately don't know, and perhaps it's good for them that they don't know, people think that the Rambam says here that you shouldn't believe that the troubles indeed came by chance.

No, the Rambam says that the troubles indeed came by chance. If you will do teshuva, then you will go out from the category of chance, and then the Almighty will protect you, as it says "He who sits Israel," and the whole topic.

Therefore says the Rambam that teshuva, this is the deeper translation, that the fast, the teshuva, is made to take out a person from the whole world of chance through the teshuva. Not to say... On the contrary, if one will say that until now was also with providence, it's further a problem according to the Rambam.

You must understand that if you are not conducting yourself in the ways of Hashem you are given to chances, **"you shall say**

it is keri," because further keri comes. He doesn't say I will add to you specifically, **"I will add to you the fury of that keri."** That is, in the world of keri there is a measure once. The punishments of the keri, the results, the bad results of the...

The Parallel Between a Person's Own Conduct and Providence

Speaker 2:

It's like this, by the Almighty there are chances and individual providence. Also by a person there is, when a person doesn't take care of his desires, he is sometimes in a good mood, and he is well, and sometimes he is bad. He also lets his own thing go by chances.

So when a person awakens himself that when he goes by chance, chance happens to him. Unlike when he watches over himself in detail, he takes very good care of himself, he takes care of his sins, then he gets individual providence.

But **"and you shall walk with Me keri"** doesn't only mean that on the sins he says that it's keri, but he lets his whole life be with such chances. He lets, when he is in anger he becomes angry, when he is in a good mood he is nice to people.

This is called left to chances, and what will happen in the end is, that enough times not having a good mood, suddenly you will find yourself with a bunch of enemies, you will cry to the Almighty oh Creator I have enemies.

But the point is not that you cry to the Almighty, because the Almighty won't make that you should stop having enemies, the Almighty will make that you should awaken yourself and do teshuva, and with every person conduct yourself properly with good character traits, and then what is the awakening?

The Essence of a Fast — "It's Not the World Conducting Itself as Usual"

Speaker 2:

The fast is more like this, one decides through what one thinks it seems to me that the main thing of a fast is to say that it's not the world conducting itself as usual. That is, today is something special. It's not a day like this, a day like that, a day of shade and a day of sun, as the Arabs say. No, this is perhaps a special thing.

Ah, there is a thing, a special thing. Who makes this? Ah, I make it. Okay, there is teshuva.

Let me say it a bit like this, that people are accustomed that they have many times bad moments. There is something that is called the moments arrived. Suddenly he finds himself that his wife ran away from him, no more any friends, then he awakens himself that it wasn't just, okay, all people have ups and downs, then he grasps that something happened.

So this is something that here it says, that it becomes a severe fast.

Communal Fast: Crying Out, Repentance, and the Path of Mercy

Halacha 1 (Continued) — The Purpose of Crying Out: Not Prayer Alone, But Repentance

The trouble caused that he should do teshuva. And the mitzva is, the more one shouldn't wait for this, for this one must fast a bit earlier.

But it's very interesting. So the crying to the Almighty is, is remembering that everything the Almighty does. Not that

everything the Almighty does, that everything the Almighty does. The Almighty does in the way of reward and punishment. You can like this, that this is the option of... As if that the Almighty is involved here, that things are not just by chance. Therefore the person will grasp where he stands in the whole thing.

Innovation: "Everything is From Heaven" Can Also Be an Aspect of Keri

It's very funny what I say, that one shouldn't say that everything is from Heaven, because then it's also an aspect of keri, do you understand? Because then you can do nothing.

So it can be that the shofar, as shofar is to invite people to the journey of the camps, is like until now it was such a chance. Now invite us as the Almighty, we want yes.

Rabbi Avraham son of the Rambam's Proof from the Mishna

One can say the simple week, this is earlier, Rabbi Avraham son of the Rambam brings to the Mishna that the Rambam will also bring later, that the elder says that everything turns on the deeds. **"Rend your hearts and not your garments,"** that what the Rambam says that it's not a matter of prayer, but it's a matter of good deeds is the Mishna, it's not the Rambam's own thing, it fits very well with the Rambam's own.

Right, but hey, why does one make a prayer? Because this tears people out of their routine.

The Blowing of the Shofar as an Awakening

Take the simple world, and I indeed wanted to say this, this is said basically, the blowing of the shofar will first say much after the Rambam, this is said. Rabbis, don't think that the shofar will save you, you know, will save you, you will undertake to be a person, this will save you.

Path of Cruelty – The Way That Leads to Cruelty

Translation

I thought a bit about a different approach, **"hareiy zeh derech achzariyus"** (this is the path of cruelty), a bit differently, that very often, very many people who are cruel, if you ask a person, why are you so cruel? He'll answer you, because the whole world is cruel.

For example, someone who exploits his workers, his tenants, he'll say, you know? If not, one becomes a poor man. Do you know what people have done to me? Because that's the extreme case. Just as the whole world is bad, I'll also be bad.

The opposite is, if everyone is bad, it's a problem, one must fix it.

So therefore, just as **"darchei hateshuva"** (the paths of repentance) means the path that leads to teshuva (repentance), **"derech achzariyus"** (path of cruelty) means the path that leads to cruelty. And so it is, when troubles happen to good people, they do teshuva. When troubles happen to bad people, they steal from one another, and survive at the other's expense, they become worse. It's a problem. Troubles are not...

Digression: The Klausenberger Rebbe's Testimony from Auschwitz

If the person, this has already been said many times, the Klausenberger Rebbe said that he's ready to go to heaven to testify, that if the Almighty has a plan to make troubles for you so they should do teshuva, he says that it doesn't work. He was in Auschwitz, no one did teshuva.

I saw this week, my sister came home with some book, she traveled to Auschwitz, whatever, to see the whole story of mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice). I don't know, there the Klausenberger Rebbe was there, and he said that it's nonsense. There was a lot of not doing teshuva.

The truth is this, I mean that certain countries you hear when there was an earthquake or I don't know what, and people saved each other. And there are many times when they steal and save themselves from one another. It has to do with how the people stand.

Return to the Topic of Derech Achzariyus

But I think now, I see that he brings very interestingly, the topic of derech achzariyus that you notice, it's always, one struggles here always with the names, where does cruelty come in?

But I think, what you're saying is perhaps very good. I mean that the simple explanation is that there's a public trouble, it's also cruelty, it's not humane. That someone has a trouble, you say, well, accidents happen, one must care. That's the basic. If you care, you'll already see, ah, how can one fix it? What does one do?

But here worse, I mean the path leads to cruelty, it will only get worse. That is, can the trouble make it worse?

Transforming the Attribute of Judgment to the Attribute of Mercy – Through Making a Humane World

I thought another thing now, I see because he brings that you see that because we learn there around the holy days, there's the topic that by prayer what one says is that one awakens the thirteen attributes of mercy, one transforms the nature, one transforms the attribute of judgment to the attribute of mercy.

The Rambam's Explanation of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy

I think that it could be the Rambam learns at length in chapter 54 if I remember about the secret of the thirteen attributes of mercy, that the Almighty taught Moshe Rabbeinu how one should conduct oneself with people. What is it? A person must conduct himself with mercy, especially a leader, he must conduct himself with much more mercy, lead people according to how they understand, according to their level, that's the topic of mercy.

I don't know, a Jew struggles with mercy is not made only to say, but to do. Right, according to the Rambam's... yes, and the Rambam's well-known statement says **"ya'asu lefanai kaseder hazeh"** (they shall do before Me according to this order), you should do.

Innovation: The World of Chance is a Cruel World – Transformation Through Actions

So although it's not the simple explanation, one must say the simple explanation is that one should pray, but it could be that when the Rambam says, one can connect it somehow, they say that you say that the world of chance is a cruel world, because the world doesn't care about you.

It's true, you know what's true? There really is such a world of chance which is a world full of judgment, it's an attribute of judgment. How does one transform the attribute of judgment to the attribute of mercy? One begins to make a humane world, a world that's built on justice and law, on mercy, that one takes care of one another, which follows from this that one decrees a fast when someone has a trouble, or when the

community has a trouble, and through this one brings in the attribute of mercy to the world.

Or according to Kabbalah it means, one brings in consciousness. That is, instead of things being random, one does it with intention, with knowledge. That itself is the attribute of mercy.

Example: The Simchas Torah Massacre

It's very interesting, because many times when a great tragedy happens, it tests everyone, right? Yes? Let's say what happened in Eretz Yisrael, the Simchas Torah slaughter. The right and the left, everyone was tested again.

The person who is on a path of cruelty, the trouble will test him that it's really a path of cruelty. And the person who is a good person will be tested, further tested that there is a path of mercy, that one should blow shofar, that one shouldn't test that it's cruel, that one should test that there's a way out, there's a way to become better. So, and that's the...

The Mekubalim are a Level Above the Rambam

It's interesting that the Rambam gave the explanation, and apparently this is how one connects the topic of crying out which one turns to the topic of fasting, which for the Rabbis isn't the emphasis exactly on the trumpets, but it's still the same idea.

But the great innovation here that stands here is that crying out to the Almighty is not the end, it's not the final, it's not the purpose. And if one cries out to the Almighty and remains afterwards, one doesn't make the contemplation, one doesn't bring the path of repentance, one has accomplished nothing, as the Rambam says regarding shofar.

It's not simple, others learn that it's to transform the attribute of judgment in the upper world to the attribute of mercy. But the Rambam says, it must begin to transform in this world the attribute of judgment to the attribute of mercy, and people should become better.

It's very interesting, because I have a friend who holds that to say that the mekubalim (kabbalists) go differently from the Rambam, but the mekubalim also agree well that how does one truly awaken the upper attributes? It's through what one does here, there's the whole order. The dispute becomes only a bit like semantic interpretation if one thinks into the substance.

I mean that all these things it's important to remember that the mekubalim are a level above the Rambam. The mekubalim learned Rambam, at least the Ramak. And when the mekubalim say things, they say afterwards, you already know what the Rambam says, you already know the basics, now he tells you another level. If one doesn't learn the Rambam, one can wrongly learn the mekubalim.

Yes, it's certain that the Almighty is not a slaughterer, one goes and makes oneself, one prays to Him, it's always connected these things.

Okay, enough learned about this. Now one can learn the topic of fasting.

Halacha 2 – From the Words of the Sages to Fast on Every Trouble

Says the Rambam, and this is with the proof. The Rambam explained the proof and the books. From the Torah, the essence is as the understanding of it.

Why is Fasting Rabbinic and Not Torah Law?

It's very interesting, why does he make it like a Torah law that's rabbinic, and he doesn't say that these are details in the Torah commandment? This I told you, because the Rambam doesn't think so, but it's a wonder.

If he said that when there's a trouble, there's a way of being by chance and that's Torah law, all these things would be Torah law and they would come out from it. The actions are not Torah law. I mean to say that the detailed laws are rabbinic.

The Rambam's Language

"Midivrei sofrim, lehit'anos al kol tzara shetavo el hatzibur" (From the words of the sages, to fast on every trouble that comes to the community). It doesn't only mean, one says on every trouble that comes to the community. Not only in the case of locusts, I don't know only for fasting. **"Mitzvas asch min haTorah liz'ok ul'ro'a bachatzotzros. Midivrei sofrim, lehit'anos"** (It's a positive commandment from the Torah to cry out and sound with trumpets. From the words of the sages, to fast).

It doesn't say in the Torah that one should fast. The Almighty is just. It doesn't say in the Torah that one should fast on troubles. It perhaps says according to the Sages it says... I mean, okay, let's say already. It says in the Torah that one should blow with trumpets. The Sages added the fasting. It means the commandment of the remains must remain, which is the main commandment. And they added the students.

"Ad sherachamim min hashamayim" (until they have mercy from heaven), yes, one should fast until the mercy will come, the... Rager... until they have mercy from heaven.

When Does One Blow Trumpets at the Fast?

"Uv'mei hata'anis ha'eilu?" (And in what of these fasts?) Then at the time of the fast... **"Uv'mei hata'anis ha'eilu?"** That is, the Rambam says what you said. The Sages said that one should fast, and when should one blow trumpets at the fast?

It could be that what the Sages did is, they made it into institutional, they said, not just give a cry, but on this day we'll arrange that all Jews will cry out together.

I think that there's another thing, that they learned. It could be a simple explanation, for doing with trumpets is not at the time of the fast. It could be that the trumpets simple explanation, according to I mean, is still more a call to prayer. As we saw in Yoel, **"tik'u shofar kir'u tzom"** (blow shofar, proclaim a fast), the shofar announces the fast.

But the Rambam says that the words of the Sages learned something else. The words of the Sages say that you should fast, and in the fast one cries out, and then one blows the trumpets on the prayer, as everything continues, here yes the trumpets are a part of the prayer.

It could be from Torah law it's not clear that the trumpets are a way of prayer, understand? It could be that yes, **"v'nizkartem"** (and you shall be remembered), okay, but **"v'nizkartem"** will fit according to the Rambam's other explanation. Aha. I don't know, one must understand.

In any case, the topic doesn't certainly have a fast... no, the Sages couldn't take away from the commandment of Torah law. About this I think that they arranged it more. They said that the crying out should be a public thing, and then the Torah goes to make crying out. Public was certainly, the innovation is only the fast.

In the Torah it doesn't say anything about fasting on troubles, that one should fast. The Sages added that one should fast. Why fasting? One can say, one also sees in the Torah on Yom Kippur one fasts. I don't know, perhaps it has something to do, perhaps not? I don't know.

Trumpets, Not Shofaros – Except in the Temple

"Teru'a bachatzotzros" (sounding with trumpets), not with shofaros, but with... when does one use a shofar? **"V'im hayu bamikdash"** (and if they were in the Temple), in Jerusalem. Mikdash means Jerusalem or the Temple, sometimes this sometimes that. It doesn't have to be in the Temple building. It says in the Gemara that "Moshe yesh mikdash." No, bamikdash means in the Temple.

But it could be bamikdash means like where it was the place in Jerusalem where they made the prayer assembly. I don't know if it was in the Temple building, perhaps in the Temple Mount, outside by the gate, whatever.

In the laws of Rosh Hashana, in the laws of shofar, we had that mikdash means Jerusalem. But I remember that the language of the Mishna on this is "b'sha'ar hamizrach hu v'ezras habayis" (at the eastern gate and the Temple courtyard), I remember the topic of blowing. So it could be that this is... okay, **"v'im hayu bamikdash, hayu meri'in bachatzotzros"** (and if they were in the Temple, they would sound with trumpets).

Laws of Fasts: Trumpets and Shofar in the Temple, and the Order of Decreeing Fasts

Halacha 4 (Continued) — Trumpets and Shofar in the Temple and in the Borders

Speaker 1: It could be, it says in the Gemara that "Moshe ish mikdash"? No, "bamikdash" means in the Temple, but it could be "bamikdash" means like... whatever was the place in Jerusalem where they made the prayer assembly. I don't know if it was in the Temple building, perhaps in the Temple Mount outside by the gate, whatever. In the laws of Rosh Hashana, in the laws of shofar we had that "mikdash" means Jerusalem.

Wait wait, I remember that the language of the Mishna on this is "b'sha'ar hamizrach hu v'har habayis" (at the eastern gate and the Temple Mount). I remember the topic of blowing. So it could be that this is... **"V'hayu bamikdash meri'in bachatzotzros uv'shofar"** (and they were in the Temple sounding with trumpets and with shofar). So the Rambam says "bamikdash," that means the Temple. Because that's what you're saying, the Rambam has that "mikdash" can mean Jerusalem.

Okay, "v'hayu bamikdash" is there... what does "v'hayu bamikdash" mean? Does it mean if the Jews are in the Temple? Yes, if the fast, the community is in the Temple, then **"meri'in bachatzotzros uv'shofar"** (they sound with trumpets and with shofar). And how does one do it? One does it that **"hashofar mekatzar"** (the shofar shortens), the shofar makes the shorter blasts, **"v'hachatzotzros ma'arichos"** (and the trumpets lengthen), the trumpets make the longer ones.

That means one begins with shofar and ends with shofar, yes?

Speaker 2: No, no, no. Does it mean it goes together?

Speaker 1: Yes, so it says explicitly I think. They go together, but the trumpets end after the shofar.

Speaker 2: No, the law of tekiah before it... no, no, no, there's tekiah and teruah. There's tekiah and teruah.

Speaker 1: No, no, no, he doesn't say that. Everything, whether one makes tekiah, teruah, tekiah? I don't know. It could be that one always does so. I don't know. "Shofar mekatzar, v'chatzotzros ma'arichos." One hears more the...

It also looks like shofar is one thing and trumpets is a pair. That is, a pair of trumpet blowers, and one blows shofar. It says "chatzotzros" plural language, and "shofar" singular language.

Speaker 2: But perhaps it's one trumpet? I don't know if there's a trumpet. Have you ever seen such a thing? Trumpets? Have you ever seen that it says in the verse singular language of trumpets, or where? I'm asking you if it says somewhere.

Speaker 1: Okay. No, it could be a trumpet is by nature a thing that one plays in a group, it's a choir. With shofar one can't do. With shofar it's a single, I don't know.

Why Trumpets Make Longer

Says the Rambam, why does one make that one should hear the trumpets more than the shofar? What does trumpets mean? In the Temple one hears more the trumpets. **"Shemitzvas hayom bachatzotzros"** (for the commandment of the day is with trumpets). The commandment of the day is... one makes with a tav by this. **"Shemitzvas hayom bachatzotzros."** The commandment of the day, the main commandment, of this day, the day that one establishes a fast, is with trumpets.

Says the Rambam, the law that one also does trumpets and shofar is a law in the Temple, **"v'ein toke'in bachatzotzros uv'shofar k'echad ela bamikdash, shene'emar 'bachatzotzros v'kol shofar hariu lifnei hamelech Hashem'"** (and one doesn't blow with trumpets and with shofar together except in the Temple, as it says "with trumpets and the sound of shofar sound before the King, Hashem"), that means "lifnei hamelech Hashem" (before the King, Hashem) in Jerusalem near the Temple, then both. But just so is only trumpets it seems.

Parallel with Laws of Rosh Hashana

And we saw the other side of this in the laws of Rosh Hashana. There's a Mishna in Rosh Hashana: on Rosh Hashana one makes longer the shofar, because the commandment of the day is with shofar, and on a fast one makes longer the trumpets, because the commandment of the day is with trumpets. But both is only in the Temple. In the borders Rosh Hashana is only shofar, and a fast only trumpets. Right?

Discussion: Why Don't We Blow Trumpets Today?

Speaker 2: So apparently, trumpets is singular language, right? There's a verse "trumpet." Ah, I'm not sure. But yes, apparently the Rambam rules that one must blow trumpets at every public fast. Why we don't conduct ourselves to blow trumpets is a good question. But it says here clearly that not with a shofar, but with trumpets yes. If someone wants to fulfill according to the opinion of the Rambam, let him buy a trumpet and blow it.

Speaker 1: I don't know, trumpets was another law. It says the kohanim should blow it, trumpets is silver. Not just anyone can take a random any instrument and call that a trumpet.

Speaker 2: No, a trumpet. Where does it say how one makes a shofar? We already learned how a shofar is kosher in the laws of shofar.

Speaker 1: Not here, but look in the verse, and presumably there's a Gemara on this.

It will be, because today, the only place where one blows completely with shofar and also trumpets, is actually in Jerusalem, as the custom of trumpets and the sound of shofar at the Kotel when one makes... the Sephardic, but where it's introduced, one does it. Also trumpets, yes. In short, the same funny people who blow shofar about this. Yes, those who restore the crown to its former glory, bring back the Temple vessels.

The Magen Avraham's Question

There's about this a... he brings here, if you'll look, you'll see, I'll just mention to speak about this, you'll see that here laws of fasts chapter 1 is that the holy Magen Avraham said, he didn't want, he didn't understand why one doesn't blow trumpets. And apparently according to the Rambam it's a commandment.

If you say, he was afraid, Rabbi Yaakov Emden argued that one must have special trumpets, special kohanim, answers, but it's not clear.

So I want to understand, the Rambam says from the words of the sages, when one does it one fulfills the commandment from the Torah, yes? From the words of the sages is the details how to do it. The fast is rabbinic, and the blowing isn't the blowing, more the repentance from it. Teruah and hara'ah, yes, the crying out and hara'ah.

But it can certainly be that it's hard to believe that the Rambam conducted himself here with trumpets and no one heard of it. It looks like the Rambam only wants to connect the two things. Thereby it's a commandment. And it could be that once when one used to make real fasts one would actually blow with trumpets? Not clear.

Leave the question isn't so great, because the essence is, anything that awakens people. So the fasts can do the work.

Speaker 2: Yes, and Rosh Hashanah does the same thing. I mean, there is a mitzvah there. On Rosh Hashanah there is a mitzvah of tekiat shofar (blowing the shofar). Here there is a mitzvah of... there is a mitzvah, as it were, with chatzotzrot (trumpets), as you said. The Rabbanan (Rabbis) can indeed add to this. It's not clear.

Speaker 1: But so... so... it's very funny that only like this as part of you can. If it says about war, "aseh lecha shtei chatzotzrot kesef" (make for yourself two silver trumpets). Well...

Speaker 2: Ah, no, I said the plural language. Yes, yes. Shtei chatzotzrot with one shofar. The shtei chatzotzrot is always a set of two silver trumpets. Okay. And there were more than one set of shtei chatzotzrot, because they needed to have "lemasa hamachaneh" (for the journeys of the camp), for war. And it's not necessarily the same people blowing, bnei Aharon (sons of Aaron) blow here, and... okay.

Halacha 5 — Order of Fasts: Monday and Thursday, Not Day After Day

When Are Fasts Decreed?

Now the Rambam says something very interesting. How... when does one decree the fasts? What do we see that one makes a fast? Now one needs to know what it means. So apparently, I just want to say something in the beginning of Halacha 5.

Apparently, the Rambam said that one fasts "midivrei sofrim ad sherachamim et shamayim" (by rabbinic decree until Heaven has mercy). That means, a trouble comes, one must sit and fast until when, until the trouble goes away. So apparently that's the simple meaning.

The Rambam says, no, one doesn't do that. "**Ta'anit elu**", yes? "**Ta'anit elu shegozrin al hatzibbur lifnei hatzarot**" (These fasts that are decreed upon the community before troubles), one doesn't do that from when the trouble has happened one begins holding continuous fasting, one day after day after day. "**She'ein rov hatzibbur yecholin la'amod badavar hazeh**" (because most of the community cannot withstand this matter). Most people cannot be in such a high alert. It's not something that one can decree that they will enter into such a special state of mind.

Speaker 2: You mean, there are Muslims who fast a whole month every year?

Speaker 1: But it will be that the Rambam means to say, once it was decreed, then it also shouldn't be day after day. But he doesn't tell us that one cannot decree every day, because "ein lecha yom she'ein tzarotav merubin mechaveiro" (there is no day whose troubles are not greater than another's). But one cannot keep making it new.

Speaker 2: But he doesn't say that here? This is not a great trouble. This is whatever the situation of exile is. For this one already fasts four times a year, what is the measure?

Speaker 1: I'm asking that it's something different. One doesn't do it day after day, but there is an order.

The Rambam says like this, apparently as if one would have to, if the world were the world, perhaps there are people who fast the whole month of Elul, I don't know, the whole aseret yemei teshuva (ten days of repentance), but the community one cannot. Therefore what is it? There is an order, in decreeing.

The Rambam, "**ve'ein gozrin bitchilah ta'anit**" (and one does not decree a fast at the beginning). Another thing, one doesn't begin, on the last day, last day, last day, later he will expand on this, when yes?

Speaker 2: Yes, he says now when yes. He says now when yes.

Speaker 1: No, here he's talking about the decreeing at the beginning.

Speaker 2: No, no, two things. One begins, in which way does one decree? The way of fasting is yes that one fasts in order until the trouble goes away. But not every day, rather what? One begins. One has struck suddenly, one decrees days.

"**Ve'ein gozer matchilah ta'anit. Ela bisheni bashabbat, uvachamisha shel'acharav uvisheni shel'acharav**" (And one does not decree a fast at the beginning. Rather on Monday of the week, and on Thursday after it and on Monday after it). One begins Monday, one fasts Thursday, another Monday, and one should continue. "**Ad she'yera rachamei**" (until He sees mercy), until the Almighty will have mercy, but until the person will have mercy. This one will see later, the source comes from the fasts for rain.

Discussion: "Bitchilah" — Two Separate Halachot

Speaker 1: It's interesting that the word "bitchilah" (at the beginning), that he's not talking here about the day after day after day. It's a new thing.

Speaker 2: Yes, he doesn't decree the fast, and before Sunday but specifically either on a Monday or on a Thursday. And also it's not day after day after day. There are two halachot. All these halachot come from the topic of fasts for rain, but the Rambam speaks here as if it's a general halacha.

Speaker 1: It's interesting, he thinks that all others also think so.

The halacha is, first of all, one doesn't fast Sunday and one doesn't fast from Shabbat to Shabbat, but during the week. Basically, only Monday and Thursday you can say, right? On Monday and Thursday, then one fasts. Why? So, then is... the Rambam doesn't say why.

And also one only begins on Monday and Thursday. No, wait, first "bitchilah" (at the beginning). Let me explain to you what it means.

First of all, one doesn't fast every day. You would apparently have to... that is, the structure of fasting the Rambam understands is, from when the trouble begins until it ends one fasts. But not every single day, rather, let me tell you, what I would have written the halacha, only Monday and Thursday. Why? Monday and Thursday are times of prayer, one comes together, whatever it is.

Now, another halacha is that the fast, one never begins it from a Thursday. That's what "ein gozrin bitchilah" (one does not decree at the beginning) means. Not that if Thursday is a time of fasting, one can enter on Thursday. Why? Because Thursday is erev Shabbat (the eve of Shabbat). If one has already fasted Monday, one can fast Thursday, but not begin Thursday.

It is, one begins Monday, and one decrees three fasts at once: Monday, Thursday, Monday. Afterwards, again next week Monday, Thursday, Monday. That's the order that appears in Tractate Ta'anit. Therefore, the Rambam understands that this is not only for fasts for rain, but for any trouble upon the community one makes according to this order.

Okay, it's interesting, because there is here something of an issue so that the prices of food shouldn't go up, if one will make a fast, one will begin Thursday, Thursday the world buys food for Shabbat. Other things appear. But here appears an issue "she'ein rov hatzibbur yecholin la'amod bah" (that most of the community cannot withstand it). One cannot fast Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, one cannot make three days at once. Every day, simply.

But it does appear that the Rambam's logic is, since a fast is made so that one should do teshuva (repentance) and the trouble should stop, it's not the simple meaning that it is, you know, sometimes a long trouble, and the rabbis make perhaps once a fast. No, one must decree a fast week after week after week until it stops.

Laws of Fasts – Order of Fasts and Decreeing a Fast on Shabbat

Halacha 5 (Continued) – Order of Fasts: Week After Week Until the Trouble Goes Away

Other things appear, but here appears the issue "**she'ein rov hatzibbur yecholin la'amod bo**" (that most of the community cannot withstand it). One cannot fast Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, one cannot make three days at once. Every day, simply.

But it does appear that the Rambam's logic is, since a fast is made so that one should do teshuva and the trouble should

stop, it's not the simple meaning like this, I know, there is sometimes a long trouble, and the rabbis make once perhaps a fast. No, one must decree a fast, week after week, until it stops. Yes. That means, every week checking. There is always an interruption apparently from one Thursday, right? One fasts Monday-Thursday-Monday, afterwards one sees if the trouble has gone away. If not, next week again. That's the order of the fast.

I don't know over the last thousand years what was done like this. Decreed a Monday-Thursday-Monday. No, one makes Monday-Thursday-Monday sometimes, but one should go according to the order until the trouble goes away. You know why? Because we don't take our fasting and teshuva seriously. And it's like, ah, one fasts.

I mean that the reason is because we are in exile. Even during the great Second World War the rabbis couldn't come together all as one and make a fast. There was so much dispute about this. Opinions and approaches. It's a great shame that we still don't have the redemption, because you can't come together until one goes to come together. One can't come together to fast? That itself should be a redemption.

No, but the reason why one couldn't come together is because he says one fasts Monday, he says fast next week. One must fast every week until Mashiach (Messiah) comes. He says, it's a wonder. Even then the great leaders of Israel couldn't come together and decree a fast Monday-Thursday-Monday "ad sherachamim" (until they have mercy). It wasn't done.

There was yes one day that was a fast. Fast, or one took an existing fast, the Tenth of Tevet, it was one day, and the zealots were against it because of this, as is their good custom. At the time. I won't also get involved with this. Already.

No, later. Ah, later a day... ah, yes, like the memorial. Okay.

But I'm telling you the reason why there is a problem, because it wasn't taken seriously. One makes one day a day of prayer, as if something will change. It doesn't work that way. One must take the thing seriously. There is something wrong. Let's fast until it changes.

It could be that there are other things. No, I wouldn't say, let's fast until it changes. I mean, let's fast until the world takes in what the Rambam told them that one must change something. That's how it goes, right? No, he will be so hungry, he will say, "Okay, I'm already ready to do teshuva, and I won't take to speak."

Yes, but you know what? If you want to say that today it's too hard for people not to eat, let's just blow shofar. You know what? Let's go back to the beginning. Every hour in a fifth way, add a prayer and pray, and blow chatzotzrot "ad sherachamim" (until they have mercy).

What did she ask? There are communities that conduct themselves this way. Okay.

Foundation: One Only Fasts for a Trouble That Is Now

So this is the main principle of how it begins and how it ends. Now one can learn that there are also times when one doesn't decree a fast in general, even in the middle of the period at all.

Halacha 6 – One Does Not Decree a Fast Upon the Community Neither on Shabbatot Nor on Yamim Tovim

The Rambam, "**Ein gozrin ta'anit al hatzibbur lo beShabbatot velo beYamim Tovim**" (One does not decree a fast upon the community neither on Shabbatot nor on

Yamim Tovim). Yes, Shabbat and Yamim Tovim (holidays). Yes, there is a mitzvah of simcha (joy) or of oneg (delight), one doesn't decree a fast on those days. Yes, I don't know even just because it's a mitzvah, it could be because the world must always eat also. Okay. Chasidic Jews will say that the merit of Shabbat helps, but I don't know if one must arrive at this. Okay.

"Vecheh, ein token bahem" (And likewise, one does not blow on them), says the Rambam, one doesn't blow **"lo beshofar velo bechatzotzrot"** (neither with shofar nor with trumpets). On Shabbat. On Shabbat one doesn't blow any shofar, not any trumpets. Right.

Okay, it's simple because one may not. Just as even on Rosh Hashanah one blows shofar on Shabbat. On Rosh Hashanah one may not, because then it's a mitzvah, one is afraid he will go to a sage.

Discussion: Whether Shofar Is a Kli Shir

But actually shofar is not the... do you remember that in the Laws of Shofar there was a great dispute among the Acharonim (later authorities) whether a shofar is a kli shir (musical instrument), that there is a concern "shema yetaken kli shir" (lest he fix a musical instrument). The same thing exists with chatzotzrot, because there are those who learn simply. "Shema yetaken kli shir" is on string instruments, which is part of the things with a string instrument, and one must constantly adjust it and fix it and make "makeh bepatish" (striking with a hammer) or with things. Chatzotzrot and these are both simple sounds, it comes from simply having a hole in a piece of wood or a piece...

And I mean that makes sense, because if not, the question is why do they say "shema yetaken" (lest he fix)? Why does one say "shema yetaken"?

And here too one sees that "velo shofar velo chatzotzrot" (and neither shofar nor trumpets) is for the same reason as "ein gozrin ta'anit" (one does not decree a fast), not because shofar is muktzeh (set aside), because Shabbat is not a time of being sad.

"Velo zo'akin umitchannin bahem bitfilah" (And one does not cry out and supplicate in prayer). On Shabbat one doesn't cry out and one doesn't beg in prayer.

"Ela im ken hikifuha ir" (Unless a city is surrounded). The Rambam, I mean in the Laws of Shabbat the Rambam also mentioned that one doesn't pray for a sick person. One visits the sick, but one doesn't make any assembly of prayer for a sick person. After Shabbat one has already said yes.

Halacha 6 (Continued) – Ela Im Ken Hikifuha Ir: Fast on Shabbat in Case of Acute Trouble

But, says the Rambam, there are yes cases when one takes a shofar and one blows on Shabbat. Not with a shofar. No, no. With chatzotzrot, says the Rambam. **"Ela im ken hikifuha ir"** (Unless a city is surrounded). What yes? If there is an acute trouble, there is this Shabbat the trouble that is happening now, "hikifuha ir" - the city is now surrounded by goyim (non-Jews) and non-Jews, and a trouble is about to happen. It's now a trouble, it's already a trouble. The goyim are standing around the city, and they are going to enter and murder.

No, I'm telling you, all these three things are not a trouble that... one has heard now news that many Jews have died. No, no. One has heard now news that they are in danger. That's the

point. One never fasts according to the Rambam for a trouble that was. One always fasts for a trouble that is now, and when it goes away one stops fasting. There's no such thing that one fasts for troubles. It's in the middle. Yes, certainly, every few days the siege continues. Certainly.

Even, says the Rambam, even "yachid hanirdaf mipnei goyim" (an individual who is pursued by non-Jews), even an individual who is being pursued by non-Jews, non-Jews are running after him, **"o listim, o ruach ra'ah"** (or bandits, or an evil spirit), then one may yes. Non-Jews means like antisemites are running after him because he is a Jew, and bandits because he has money. I don't mean the Jews, I mean simply the rich... it could be Jewish bandits, no difference at all. Or "mipnei ruach ra'ah" (because of an evil spirit), and an evil spirit comes, then yes **"mit'anin aleihem beShabbat"** (one fasts for them on Shabbat) when the trouble is now a new thing. **"Vezo'akin umitchannin bitfilot"** (And one cries out and supplicates in prayers), then one may yes cry out and supplicate in prayers. Very good.

Discussion: Why May One Pray on Shabbat in Case of Acute Trouble?

What is the issue? What is the difference? So then it doesn't work with the same thing that one must do teshuva so that one shouldn't know that it's a coincidence? It's some other kind of prayer? It's the same thing, what is the question?

And it's pikuach nefesh (saving a life)? Ah, because if one will now quickly make a cheshbon hanefesh (accounting of the soul), one will still now be able to save the thing. Yes, whatever. Okay.

Come here, one cannot reckon all halachot according to the reasons. I don't believe that works ever. Prayer means, even according to the Rambam, by a fast... one asks the Almighty. Not that one only says a sermon, one also says the sermon, but one prays, that's what one does. And Shabbat, if it's a trouble that one must already on Shabbat, one cannot wait until Monday, by Monday one can already be dead, one must cry and fast on Shabbat.

No, the novelty here is not, pikuach nefesh overrides everything, that's not any prohibition at all. Crying on Shabbat is not any Torah prohibition, it's only an issue of not having joy on Shabbat. The novelty here is that the crying is genuine, the crying will save something. It's not only something of an issue so that the world should wake up and can do it Sunday, but it works. If one will cry and one will quickly do teshuva, one will still be able to save.

Halacha 6 (Continued) – Aval Ein Token: Shofar on Shabbat Only for Practical Rescue

The Rambam says further, **"Aval ein token"** (But one does not blow) - when one makes an assembly of prayer on Shabbat, one can gather the world to pray, but one doesn't blow shofar. When may one yes blow shofar? **"Ela im ken"** (Unless) - if the blowing is for a practical reason, **"lichanos ha'am leilech la'azor otan ulehatzilan"** (to gather the people to go help them and save them), then one may use the shofar also for this. Because then the shofar is a part of the rescue, it's simple, it's not a shofar of a segulah (spiritual remedy). It's also simple, it's not any prohibition, according to what we said that it's not a kli shir.

I just want to say, the Rambam doesn't mention that in such a case it will be a mitzvah like "le'esof ha'am" (to gather the

people). It could be that was only a law in the desert. It's a practical thing, if one must need. It's not a mitzvah. It could be "bechatzotzrot le'esof ha'am" (with trumpets to gather the people) was only in the desert, it's a halachic thing. It's not a mitzvah, it's only a practical thing. Well, certainly. It could be in the desert it was a mitzvah, but now one is simply talking that it's... that it's... how should I say? It's to gather the world to go save. Because it doesn't need to appear here at all. If it's an ambulance that makes sirens, one may make even a Torah prohibition. It's a different kind, it's not any kind of thing of prayer.

Discussion: What Does "Token" Mean Here – Siren or Prayer?

What the Rambam brings is only because there is a version in the Gemara that says that one is "matri'in beShabbat" (sounds an alarm on Shabbat), and the Rambam interprets that "hatra'ah" (alarm) doesn't mean... doesn't mean blowing shofar or teruah (alarm blast) that one learns from prayer, but the alarm that is a part of...

That's my question, the "token" here means that one goes out in the street and one runs around like a siren, or yes, that one makes tekiet (shofar blasts) in the beit midrash (study hall) so that the world should grasp the severity of the matter?

It could be the Rambam is yes speaking of this, that one may then also make tekiet as part of prayer so that the world should grasp that it's serious or such a thing, no?

No, no, once again. There is a Mishnah that states "al eilu matri'in". The Rambam now has brought the Mishnah, okay? Now, "matri'in" there means... Now the Gemara says that "matri'in", the Gemara says that "matri'in" doesn't mean blowing shofar, although one could have translated the language of teruos, it means "matri'in b'tefillah". Very good. So the Rambam understood that it also means that one is matri'a lekabetz. That's the simple meaning. The truth is that it's straightforward, but that's how it's stated in the Mishnah. So the Rambam wanted to say it that way. And you're right that seemingly, according to the plain meaning of Scripture, perhaps all shofar is built on this. I don't know.

But now the Rambam says, what is the halachah? One must know that there is a dispute about this. The Rambam said that one fasts on Shabbos if there is an actual emergency, and Rashi, other commentators, said that one doesn't fast on Shabbos. One perhaps prays, but one doesn't fast. Even a woman according to... yes. Rashi said that the reason is because our fasts won't help anyway. It's a pnei Rashi. What does Rashi say? What is the language?

Ahh... The Rambam also admits that when there is a situation of... when one can go leilech la'azor ulehatzilan, then one should do something different than... than... than... perhaps one can't do anything with geladen. One knows to say both.

Again, what one can do practically is certainly that for this one may be mechallel Shabbos, it's pikuach nefesh. Perhaps he means it's a bit less than that? Perhaps that's the secret? Perhaps that's what you're saying? Perhaps you're saying well? Perhaps the teki'ah is more like when one comes to the beis hamidrash, you should take it seriously enough, so that the few chaverim who are ba'alei seichel should come up with solutions and the like. Just the masses running there won't help, they'll all be killed. But if the few chachamim grasp the severity of the matter, that's what I meant. I say, blowing shofar in shul, not because we don't want everyone to run now

to that city, because they all... It won't help. There is a... so that the people should grasp the severity of the matter, and then the people who have solutions should know that it's important.

Fasts for Emergencies – Laws of Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, Individual Fast

Practical Discussion: Fast on Shabbos – An Incident That Occurred on Simchas Torah

Speaker 1: Rather what, one blows a shofar in the beis hamidrash, perhaps that's indeed a plan, and that will help that one should take it seriously... I don't know, I don't know. Perhaps. Okay. Yes.

That's Shabbos. The same thing, just, I want to recall for example, a few years ago on Simchas Torah there was such a situation in Eretz Yisrael of ish kefi, and many people conducted themselves that one proceeded with the hakafo in order, as it should be.

I don't know if it's the right thing. Is there a dispute among Rishonim? According to the Rambam one should have fasted. And according to the Tur one doesn't fast, but one prays. I think that everyone agrees that one must pray. Everywhere people said a chapter of Tehillim, but many people acted as if they saw... One didn't see any change. The Rebbe danced like every year.

No, that's not the way. Yes, what... yes, what... yes, it's not the way. Not only to live in the reality, one must serve the Almighty. One shouldn't be smarter than the Almighty. If the Almighty makes an emergency on Shabbos, it's a problem, one must do something on Shabbos. What's the question? That's the halachah.

But regarding fasting there is a dispute among Rishonim. There are those who say that one must fast, and there are those who say that one doesn't need to fast. And on this one can perhaps be lenient or go... But yes, certainly. It's certain that one cries out, even on a regular Shabbos Yom Tov one may not. If there is truly an emergency that one can, it could be that your prayer now will save a Jew, what's the doubt that one must do this?

Do you want to know if one may continue with the hakafo? I don't know, there are those who continue, one must finish the hakafo, what should one do? I asked whether it's a virtue that one continued with the same. No, no.

Meaning, when one can no longer make any change, it's a great virtue that one doesn't break, one continues with Torah and mitzvos as is customary in order. But this is a new... But one must fast or pray about an emergency that exists now. It's certain that one must do something.

I don't believe that the people who say that these are tepid. I don't believe that they're true tzaddikim who continue on. There are only such people who say, the way that I can pray is to dance with a Torah. Okay, go know, I know. Perhaps that's a way.

Halachah 2: One Doesn't Decree Fasts Initially on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, Purim and Chol HaMoed

Speaker 1: Now so, the Rambam says further, "**And similarly one doesn't decree fasts initially on Rosh Chodesh.**" When one decrees fasts, when the Chachamim need to establish a fast, one doesn't do it. The first day. One doesn't begin on Rosh Chodesh, "**or on Chanukah, or**

Purim, or on Chol HaMoed." Not only Shabbos and Yom Tov may one not, but the Chachamim decreed on their own.

No, no, but here there is a distinction. This one may not do initially, but when one has already begun. It means the first day. One makes Monday and Thursday. One never makes a Monday that is Rosh Chodesh. But Monday I already fasted. Thursday is Rosh Chodesh, then one does fast even on Rosh Chodesh. When it falls, one does.

Different from Shabbos. Shabbos even when it falls, I think that one doesn't decree, but Shabbos even so one doesn't do. I think that by mourning there is something like a similar halachah.

Okay, **"And just as when one fasts for an emergency even one day?"** If one has already begun fasting, **"and one of these days falls on them,"** it came in, the next day was Chanukah or Chol HaMoed, **"one fasts and completes the day in fasting,"** one does complete, one continues with the day in fasting.

Discussion: Ta'anis Esther

Speaker 2: Who needs to fast?

Speaker 1: I think, Ta'anis Esther one fasted a day before, and by good fortune the salvation came. Otherwise one wouldn't...

Ah, no, the tzoma wasn't on... We established it on a day before Purim. The tzoma was somewhere around Pesach time. Perhaps that's how it works.

Halachah 2 (continued): Pregnant Women, Nursing Women and Children

Speaker 1: Okay, who needs to fast? **"These fasts that they fast for emergencies."** The Rambam says, **"pregnant women and nursing women and children don't fast on them."** The Chachamim didn't decree that far.

Although for example the fast of Esther, the Rambam did say that also pregnant women and nursing women need to fast. But children don't need to fast. But the Rambam perhaps means lehafkia.

Speaker 2: Where does it say that also the children?

Speaker 1: Yes, ah, in Yonah, yes? When Yonah decreed a fast, it was even animals. Yes, yes. But in practice, the halachah is not children.

Innovation: Reasoning Why Children Don't Fast

Speaker 1: Okay. The Rambam says, it fits very well. Because the gentile's reasoning means that the fast itself accomplishes, the more people. But we understand that it's all that the person should do teshuvah. What do you want from the innocent child? Let the adults start behaving better.

Speaker 2: Right, and the animals also one made them fast.

Speaker 1: No, what is a part?

Halachah 3: Permitted to Eat at Night – Law of Sleep

Speaker 1: The Rama says, **"And they are permitted to eat at night even though they fast tomorrow."** By a fast that one makes for an emergency that has come, it doesn't begin at night. Not like Yom Kippur or Tishah B'Av which begins the night before. Not like the fast for rain.

He says, **"except for the fast for rain,"** the fast that one makes for lack of rain, does begin the night before, **"as will be explained."**

Now, the Rambam says, once he's already speaking about the matter of day and night, he says thus: **"And any fast on which one eats at night, whether communal or individual."** Any fast, whether it's a communal fast or an individual fast where one may eat at night, until when may one eat? **"Behold one eats and drinks until dawn rises."** It doesn't begin at midnight, or I don't know what people might think the stakes are. He says, it begins from dawn onward, not until dawn, but from dawn.

The Rambam says, **"And this is when one didn't sleep,"** if one doesn't sleep, if one didn't go to sleep, then one can eat at dawn. **"But if one slept,"** if one went to sleep, one shouldn't wake up early and eat. **"One doesn't return and eat,"** one shouldn't eat early.

Discussion: Custom to Rise Early in the Morning

Speaker 2: Unlike those who conduct themselves to rise early and begin fasting.

Speaker 1: No, that's specifically on... No, that's because one needs... That's stated regarding Yom Tov, I'll tell you already. That's seemingly because he was already mesaye'ach da'as, he's speaking about something like that.

There is in the Tur, the sleep is stated that if one made a condition, one may. That is, if one knows before one goes to sleep that one will get up and eat, one may. And not, as if he was already mafsik. Since he went to sleep, normally a person doesn't get up before the last and he eats, means that he was already mafsik. But it's stated that if one knows that one will get up, it's stated in Shulchan Aruch.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Discussion: Distinction Between Communal and Individual Fast

Speaker 1: Okay, the Rambam is speaking meanwhile only about a fast for an emergency, he's not speaking about a communal fast.

Speaker 2: According to the Rambam would there be a distinction?

Speaker 1: No, no, he says clearly "any fast one eats on it whether communal or individual". And those who conduct themselves to begin fasting, because that you say one goes with the Rama and with other poskim?

No, no, one must make a condition. If someone gets up, wants to get up early, has davened and the like before Asarah B'Teves, if he wants to get up early, he needs to make a condition. He needs to begin... One needs to know, if the condition begins early, what is the matter? Because he is mafsik. A fast is from when one is mafsik, we will learn later the halachos. He is already mafsik, he was mesaye'ach da'as. If you are mafsik, you're right that the obligation of the fast is only in the morning, only during the day, but... That's how I understand the reasoning of it.

Lomdus: Why May One Eat All Night?

Speaker 1: It's interesting, you've already eaten. It's interesting, one needs to understand the lomdus of it, because the communal fast begins early. What is the proof that one who is on at night may eat all night? From what at night is it like an individual fast, because you've already begun...

Speaker 2: No, not the individual, the entire community fasts from when...

Speaker 1: A normal person, a normal person. Yes, if you're still up, you never finished your day. But if you had your supper, you went to sleep. If a person has his custom that he wakes up in the middle of the night, he drinks a cup of water, he has no problem. Indeed so.

Okay. One isn't speaking about such a custom that this is stated in Shulchan Aruch. It's not a Rambam and a distinction, he doesn't say this but...

Halachah 4: Individual Fast for His Emergency

Speaker 1: Now. Until now we learned about a communal fast. The Rambam says thus, until now we learned a communal fast for an emergency. The same thing, an individual fast we will now learn. Now we will learn about an individual fast. There is also such a thing as a person makes himself a fast.

The Rambam says, **"Just as the community fasts for their emergency,"** an emergency that is relevant for the entire community, **"so the individual fasts for his emergency."**

Discussion: Is It an Obligation or Permission?

Speaker 1: "How so?" It appears, the Magen Avraham says, it appears from the Rambam that it's an obligation. It's exactly like we learned that there is a rabbinic obligation from the Chachamim to make a fast "for any emergency that comes upon the community", so an individual has an obligation, as the Rambam will say, "so the individual fasts for his emergency".

"How so? Behold if he had a sick person," a close person of his is sick, **"or one lost in the desert, or imprisoned in prison."** He lists three of the four who need to give thanks.

"Or one lost in the desert," he's wandering. "He had" means his wife, his child, someone who is important to him. Perhaps he himself is in the desert, should he fast? He has nothing to eat, he can't go in the desert. A "he had", no, "lost in the desert" everything goes back to "he had". He has one of his close people who is lost in the desert, or imprisoned in prison.

He also doesn't say what "his" means. It could be that someone who is a greater ba'al rachamim, his "his" is broader. His "his" means all neighbors, all good friends, not just his wife and children. Someone who it touches, "whoever is close to him has to fast for him".

Does he have a mitzvah or does he have an obligation? "He has". "He has" usually in the Rambam means permission. "He had", "he has", it's something like... No, I think that the Maggid Mishneh isn't right. The Maggid Mishneh derives from the "just as" that one sees that it's such an obligation. One agrees that it's a mitzvah, but it doesn't look like an obligation.

Innovation: The Power of the Individual Over Himself – Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen

Speaker 1: I saw Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, the holy Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, says in his sefer, I think in the name of his rebbe the Ishbitzer, that when a person sees a certain bad trait that he needs to work on himself, he should undertake it strongly, he says, it's not just that he stumbles, but just as the Torah gave power to the Chachamim to decree a decree on the community because one needs it "yagdil Torah", the same power that the communal Chachamim have over the entire community, the person has over himself.

So when a person sees in himself a certain weakness, it becomes like his rabbinic mitzvah, and it will be that he obligates himself to work on it. And once he begins it, he undertakes that he needs to work on his desire for food, I don't know what, it's not simple, each time it's a complete obligation, he brings it out very nicely.

Here one sees something like this kind of thought, and the thought one can see here a bit, that the person over himself is the master over himself just as the Chachamim are master over the community.

By this I say, I'm not certain that it's exactly, the Maggid Mishneh claims that it's an obligation. "He has" means it's an obligation, yes. Because the language "he has", they mentioned many times in the Rambam, "he has" means "he has permission", he may. I don't know if one can understand.

Laws of Fasting – Individual Fast, Acceptance of Fast, Dream Fast

Halachah 2 (continued) – Individual Fast: He Has to Fast

The Rambam's words: He has to fast for him... and to seek mercy in his prayer and says Aneinu in every prayer that he prays... They don't fast on Shabbosos and not on festivals and not on Rosh Chodesh and not on Chanukah and Purim.

Many times the Rambam uses the language because he had the words in his mouth, so when a person writes something, he uses the language that he has.

No, that I don't agree with anymore.

But it could be that there's no contradiction, because just as the Chachamim have a right to use their discretion, about what should one now decree fasts? A person must use his own discretion. It's hard to say an obligation. If he doesn't do it, to say that he commits a transgression, isn't hard to say so. If he comes to the rav to ask, should I make a fast? Something like that. I know few people who conduct themselves to fast for individual emergencies, although it would be a good thing.

To Seek Mercy in His Prayer – The Main Point

"To seek mercy in his prayer" is the point, the main point. More than the fast. But there is one from fast with the rabbis. There are people who fast, but it's not accepted by the masses. Don't know. Yes, "he has to fast for him". What is a good thing? Like someone has an emergency, he fasts one day, it didn't happen. It's already a thousand days ad sheracheim, that's perhaps difficult.

One must know, it could be that the tzaddikim would say that when a person is sufficiently in distress, he has a sick person, he is sufficiently in distress. "To seek mercy" is a tremendous thing, but he must be strong. A person has an emergency, yes? He must now maintain his home, he must maintain his life. One isn't speaking about this.

On the contrary, from this "he has". When he himself is the sick person, or someone whose wife is sick, it's not "he has" a sick person, he is a sick person. He's speaking about his sick person. That's the Gemara, "a poor person needs to have mercy on himself", he should fast until he feels a bit weakened.

"And to seek mercy in his prayer and says Aneinu", he also says Aneinu, like Aneinu, the Rambam hasn't yet mentioned Aneinu in communal prayer. Seemingly what he means to say is, by him it's a full fast, it's a proper fast. By him it's a full fast,

not just his own thing, it's a law that he must say Aneinu. "In every prayer that he prays".

Laws of Fasting: Individual Fasts, Dream Fasts, and Conduct During Fasting

And the same thing, just as the previous laws when one does not begin a fast for the community, also applies to the individual, "they should not fast on Sabbaths, festivals, new moons, Chanukah, or Purim."

Very good. Now we'll see what happens with the individual. For the individual, is there also not the matter of BaHaB (Monday-Thursday-Monday) or what?

No, an individual is not concerned with BaHaB. It may be that it's a nice thing to fast BaHaB, but an individual can do according to what he understands. It's not stated, for example, "until they have mercy on him" or the fence of the poor. Seemingly yes, but no, I say that BaHaB is only a law that the community decrees BaHaB. An individual can fast on Tuesday also, it's not...

What does it mean? A fast itself without a request for mercy? It's like "to fast" or "to request mercy," there are two forms of how one can do it.

Rather to request. This means that if a person is sufficiently aroused and he requests mercy, then the fast is not lacking. Perhaps the fast will help him be more aroused, I don't know.

The Matter of Fasting is Not to Suffer

Very good. One needs this - the intention of a fast. Very good. When a person makes his own fast, he must be with an acceptance for what he is making a fast. Very good. Because if not, he's just hungry, it must come with an intention, kavanah. I mean that it's a very nice thing.

The matter is not to suffer. The matter is that you see as they saw before. He sets aside a day, today is not just...

No, I remember some story, I know, some rabbi didn't eat. And he brought the fast, he says, I'm not fasting, but who has the strength to eat in such a time, in such a trouble? If that is a different type, it's a great suffering, but that's not any law of fasting. The law of fasting must be with an acceptance, with something new. I don't know to undertake a fast apparently.

Law 3 — How One Accepts a Fast

The Rambam's words: How does one accept? After he prays the afternoon prayer, he says after the prayer, "Behold I am in a fast," and completes in his heart to fast tomorrow.

What does he come? After he prays the afternoon prayer, he says after the prayer, "Behold I am in a fast," I will be in a fast, and completes in his heart to fast tomorrow. It's called, he says both things. He says one says, and he completes in his heart to fast tomorrow.

Interesting, why are both needed? Because he must say. I mean in the laws by searching for chametz he gave a language... also not clear, yes. Okay, not clear.

The Rambam says, "and so even if he eats at night he has not lost anything." That means, it doesn't mean that because one accepts one must be the day before. It doesn't mean that one must not eat from then. He will not eat from early morning.

But this stands differently than a communal fast, where he said that from when one ate the last meal of the previous night the fast begins. I mean so, this should be also. He will earlier mention communal fast to his individual fast.

What he says here is that it's also not at minchah, he doesn't say at maariv even. And after minchah one still goes to eat.

Acceptance for Multiple Days

And so if he completed and accepted upon himself to fast three or four days one after another, if one has undertaken, this is indeed completed and accepted, he was strong, didn't think about it, he must be decisive. He said, and he accepted upon himself to fast three or four days one after another, even though he eats every single night, this is called interruptions. From Sabbath to Sabbath, yes, righteous ones, eating every single night, he has not lost his fast, because the main fast is still the daytime.

And he doesn't need intention for each and every day from the previous day. That means, he means to say that one can make one acceptance for all the days.

Eh, meanwhile he still goes to eat? It's not a contradiction. The next three days, someone says, he fasts, and he fasts each one of the days, not the nights.

Acceptance Only for One Day, Then Reconsidered

Now, the Rambam says further, if he accepted upon himself from the previous day to fast tomorrow only, what happens in such a case? A person accepted to fast one day, tomorrow, and he fasted. And at night, at night he reconsidered, he reconsidered to fast on the second day, he will fast again. Even though he didn't eat between the fasts, that means, even if he didn't even fast out in between, it doesn't help. This is not a fast, because he didn't accept upon himself from the previous day, because the acceptance was only for one day, and today he didn't accept for tomorrow, but thought, I'll fast further. He has no law of fasting, he may eat. Or he can reconsider in the middle and go back. Yes.

And needless to say if he was eating and drinking at night and arose in the morning and reconsidered to fast, he reconsidered in the morning he'll fast, that this is not a fast at all. This means not a fast. One must come with the intention beforehand.

Law 4 — Dream Fast

The Rambam's words: One who sees a bad dream needs to fast the next day so that he will return and be aroused to his deeds and return in repentance.

Now, the Rambam says another type of individual fast. Yes, interesting... One who sees a bad dream, if someone sees a bad dream, he needs to fast the next day.

The Rambam's Explanation: So That He Will Return and Be Aroused to His Deeds

Here the Rambam will insert his explanation of why. Because here until now he simply, a person has trouble, it's the same as keshem, he didn't say keshem. But by a dream fast a person might think perhaps also what is the simple meaning that it's some kind of segulah. A fast is good for a dream. How does one nullify a bad dream? Through fasting.

The Rambam, why? So that he will return, so that he should do teshuvah. And be aroused... here stands the first time the Rambam's language of awakening, he says from the shofar blowing. And be aroused to his deeds... he's sleeping. When did he have his bad dream? When he sleeps. Stop sleeping. As the tzaddik said, sleep less, simply fewer dreams. This is what the Rambam says, sleep less, wake up. To his deeds... I will catch what you're doing. And return in repentance.

What Does a Bad Dream Mean?

And the Rambam doesn't tell us here what a bad dream means. It could be that when one learns simply forward in the Rambam, a bad dream means he has like a dream of sin, like a nocturnal emission, such a thing. He dreams of sins, he should be aroused that he thinks bad things during the day and then meditates at night.

No, not tractate. A dream that a trouble happened, why? The Rambam didn't bother with a dream of trouble. This is there you know, a bad dream means a bad dream. People become frightened. A person becomes frightened, he should catch, ah, troubles can indeed happen if one doesn't do teshuvah. This is the simple meaning.

The Rambam only says that you shouldn't think that it's because the dream is some kind of segulah. I say, others would perhaps have said, that the King of Heaven sent you the dream so that you should... The Rambam... perhaps yes. The Rambam is sometimes riding on dreams, and he already mentions anything from the Rambam on dreams. Yes, and still it's prophecy. But that's not here. A dream, a prophet receives prophecy in a dream. But what must he do so you should wake up? This fits very well. In Torah what he says last week by the shofar blowing, that the matter of awakening is that one shouldn't dream, one should think. Yes.

Anyway. Okay. On this on Rosh Hashanah it says that one shouldn't sleep during the day and the like, because the Rambam says that one must wake up to the shofar blowing. It's interesting, because there's a midrash in Yalkut Shimon 248, that Rabbi Shimon on Rosh Hashanah, when he slept on Rosh Hashanah he dreamed this and that dream.

Interesting. At night. Perhaps at night.

No Acceptance from the Previous Day Necessary

Anyway, there's still interesting, because here he needs to fast the next day, he doesn't need to accept the fast at minchah. Right when he wakes up from the bad dream, he begins fasting as this is as if Heaven already wanted his acceptance, like the sanctity of Heaven, some such thing.

"Needs" — An Obligation

And also it's implied in the Rambam "needs." That means, other Rishonim say explicitly that if he has fear, the advice is that he should fast, he should feel better. But the Rambam makes it yes into a "needs." It's interesting.

One must also know exactly what is the definition of a bad dream. The rabbis of current times say that one shouldn't fast, and not fasting is also the segulah. Just as fasting is a segulah, so not fasting is a segulah. Okay, there's also the thing of saying "chalma tava chazit," which is in the Gemara, that one should interpret it for good. Yes, there's also the psalm by the priestly blessing.

About this I think bad dream, I don't agree. A bad dream is something that shows him that it's a dream like he beat someone's bones. A frightening dream. That's the meaning. There are different versions of this in the poskim which dreams and things, but...

Law 5 — Dream Fast on Sabbath

The Rambam's words: He fasts even on the Sabbath, and prays "answer us" in every prayer, even though he didn't accept upon himself from the previous day. But one who fasts on the Sabbath fasts another day because of the nullification of Sabbath delight.

Anyway, the Rambam says, but this is the important thing: "He fasts even on the Sabbath." That means, a dream fast can be understood on the Sabbath, if the dream came at night. If it means like this: when one accepts upon himself a fast, then certainly they don't accept on the Sabbath. But when one is invited to fast through a bad dream, which he says that from Heaven one was aroused to fast, then he fasts even on the Sabbath.

"And prays 'answer us' in every prayer," every prayer of the Sabbath he says "answer us," "even though he didn't accept upon himself from the previous day," even if he didn't himself accept upon himself from the previous day.

A Fast for Nullifying Sabbath Delight

But, the Rambam says, "one who fasts on the Sabbath, fasts another day, because of the nullification of Sabbath delight." He must do teshuvah. Here one sees that... since when is there a mitzvah of a fast for nullifying Sabbath delight? He must do teshuvah for nullifying Sabbath delight. Why must it be specifically in the form of a fast?

I agree. In the Gemara it says, "add a fast to his fast," he should make a fast. It's simple that a fast has to do with teshuvah. So he should do teshuvah for his fast.

Laws of Fasting: Dream Fast on Sabbath, Partial Fast, and Conduct During Fasting

Law: Dream Fast on Sabbath — Continuation of Discussion

Not a joke, it's a metaphor. It's a metaphor. It's a metaphor. The Rambam says simply. The Rambam doesn't have metaphors. The Gemara I would have interpreted that it's a metaphor. The Gemara truly means to say, don't do it, because you will need to fast for the fast, so better don't start. You will fast and you will need to fast again.

In general it's funny, one didn't fulfill Sabbath delight and one torments himself even more. Perhaps he should eat two cholents on Sunday instead of Sabbath, in memory of Sabbath delight? It would make more sense, no? A wonder how the Rambam rules this as law.

Answer #1: The Fast on Sabbath Was Not Legitimate

It could be he means to say that the fast of the Sabbath was not a legitimate fast because of which you nullified Sabbath delight, you must still fast another day for the dream that you had. Where have we not heard such a thing that every time a person nullifies Sabbath delight one should need to fast a day? I agree, a person doesn't eat enough good kugel on Sabbath, he must fast Sunday.

Answer #2: Repentance of the Same Kind

It could be that there's some law on Sabbath that the teshuvah should be of the same kind. Just as someone forgot to light candles, he must light another candle. You didn't do Sabbath delight, the teshuvah is a counterweight. But the next Sabbath he should eat two cholents. It doesn't say that, it says he should fast Sunday. Two cholents is no longer Sabbath delight, it's already... Sabbath is however much is delight, more than that is no longer delight. It can hurt, it can hurt.

Conclusion

Okay, it's indeed a wonder why the Rambam rules this way. What does a wonder mean? It's in the Gemara. It's not a wonder, he says another Gemara. It doesn't mean that one must do everything that's written.

Digression: Rav Hai Gaon and the Rambam's View on Dreams

Okay. Now we'll learn another interesting law called partial fast. And one can fast half a day. What does this mean? We'll learn. He brings very interestingly from Rav Hai Gaon. Rav Hai Gaon says a few things. He says that the Rambam in Laws of Sacrificial Offerings says that matters of dreams neither raise up nor bring down. I mean that there it says that if a person dreamed that he tithed or I don't know what.

But he says that Rav Hai Gaon says, he fasts even on Sabbath, because he's anyway not going to have Sabbath delight. He thinks the whole day about his frightening dream, and he'll feel bad about his eating, so he should rather fast. Something like this, one must check.

The Rambam doesn't say all these things. These are all interpretations of people who were not happy with a dream fast. But the Rambam had his views, but when it comes to a Gemara where it clearly states in the law, he brought it as it's written, and he went further.

Law: Partial Fast

The Rambam says, **one can fast daily hours**. There's such a thing as a person should make a partial fast. The Rambam doesn't tell us about a trouble that happened to him. Look what it says, first of all what it means.

And it should be that he doesn't eat anything the rest of the day. How? That means, hours cannot be until a time, it must be from a time. It must be a whole time. One can begin in the middle of a day. That from this it becomes fasted from then until then.

How? One whose head was busy with his affairs and occupied with his needs. A person was busy with his things. Busy or occupied. He says here the language, busy with his affairs and occupied with his needs, **and didn't eat until midday or until nine hours**, he didn't eat part of the day. He reconsidered that it's a shame, he already anyway fasted half a day, **he reconsidered to fast the hours remaining of the day**, that it should be with intention, it shouldn't be simply I forgot to eat, it should be called a law of fasting. **Behold he fasts those hours, and prays in them "answer us,"** is it counted indeed as a fast? If he accepted from now. As from now it becomes a true fast. **For he accepted upon himself the fast before the hours of the fast.** His hours of fasting are as if the afternoon. And the afternoon already accepted the fast.

Innovation: Partial Fast Even After Eating

The Rambam says an even greater innovation, **and so even if he ate and drank, and afterwards returned to fast the rest of the day, behold this is a partial fast**. From when he undertook, and from now he will no longer eat, it's called a fast.

On this the Raavad disagrees, and he says that it's nothing. What does the Raavad say? Why? Because if he ate half a day... yes, what kind of fast is this? The Raavad is not... that when he anyway didn't eat, and from now you sanctify for a fast, he agrees. But the Rambam doesn't give the backstory, as if about a trouble that happened to him, one tears here. No difference, no, simply, openly.

Discussion: Individual Fast Without Trouble

We haven't yet had such a thing as a person can simply make an individual fast.

Okay, you know what's the other trouble? Rabbi, we mentioned that there's perhaps a Jew who needs healing, so be it.

What isn't? Because the fast is a matter of teshuvah.

So? He will now elevate the meals that he didn't eat.

I told you, stop asking questions of teshuvah on all the details of the laws of fasting. It's not going to work. One can answer it if you specifically want, it would be... The laws don't work that way, right?

True, true.

Law: Conduct During Fasting — Not Being in Joy

Now, the Rambam says further. **Anyone who is immersed in a fast**, one who is immersed in a fast, an interesting language, he is... he is immersed, he dwells in a fast. Yes, he is in a fast, he fasts. One knows already, no difference which fast, **whether fasting for his trouble or for his dream, or fasting with the community for their trouble**, as a communal fast.

That means, it's not enough that he shouldn't eat, not enough he shouldn't eat, but he should have all other pleasures like going to the sauna and going, I don't know what having fun. Rather **behold he should not conduct himself with luxuries**, he shouldn't be luxurious, he shouldn't be... well, what's the language? **And should not be frivolous** shouldn't be **with laughter and frivolity, and should not be happy and good-hearted**, he shouldn't be in joy.

Interesting, frivolous means a greater level, he means being in frivolity, but not that this is a virtue, which this is yes, on a regular day a person must indeed be... and good-hearted always feasting, on this one shouldn't be in such an act. Frivolous means playing games, which means for this and not just being too joyful.

Laws of Fasting: Completing One's Fast, Local Custom, and the Order of a Fast Day

"Rather, one should be sad and worried," one should be sad and worried, and not take, **"Why should a living person complain, a man for his sins?"** The Rambam interpreted this verse in... as some kind of obligation? No, the Rambam himself brought this verse in the Laws of Repentance, right? He said that here we see that a person has free choice, "from the mouth of God come neither evil nor good." What does it mean that you will complain? Think about stopping sinning. He brings this verse, so it's certainly about this.

Therefore you should think, you should worry about your sins, you shouldn't just complain. But he brings out very nicely that the entire fast is about the fact that there are sins, the purpose of the fast is to awaken oneself to the sins. Therefore if you're going to be lightheaded, maybe there's a sin and maybe not, you'll have nothing from the fast. But the entire purpose of the fast is, it's very important, because there's such a custom, you know, it's hard to fast, people go to sleep and pass the time of the fast. According to the Rambam, the entire point of the fast is to pray and be in a certain state of mind.

Digression: Dispute About Fasts

But what can one do? One cannot abolish the enactments of the Sages. The Rebbe Reb Elimelech already said that if the Men of the Great Assembly had known who he was, or if they

were of today's generations, they wouldn't have instituted any fasts. So, it's already an old dispute.

I saw in Reb Yoel Kahn's stories last night that there was some Lubavitcher, they saw him sitting at home on Tisha B'Av and he was dancing. They ask him, "Why are you dancing?" He says, "What do you mean?" He says, "I think that on Tisha B'Av the Almighty is also present."

In short, I don't know if it's a contradiction with the Rambam, because that person already did teshuvah, but the Rambam gives the way of doing teshuvah with a fast through being drawn in, not through being joyful. If someone is a Chassid now, he has an entirely different path.

The Tzeitsher brings out very nicely from the Shelah that if he's going to be angry, it's even worse. That is, if someone has a question of whether he's going to be with joy and a good heart, he'll come to anger, anger is even worse. Anger is itself the sin that one is worried about.

Okay. In short, it's not so simple. When it comes to complex spiritual accounting matters, one must weigh what needs... The deed is clear that he doesn't mean sadness and anger.

Law: Tasting Food on a Fast Day

Now, the Rambam says further, **"And it is permitted to taste the dish."** One may, on a fast day one may not actually eat, but tasting the dish one may indeed do. Tasting means to see if it tastes good. One is going to say, it doesn't mean swallowing. **Even a revi'it**, one may take a revi'it into the mouth, as it swishes in the mouth, feel the taste of it, **"provided that he doesn't swallow,"** one shouldn't swallow it, **"rather he tastes and spits out,"** he should taste and then spit out.

Law: Forgot and Ate — Completes His Fast

What happens if a person forgot that he's fasting and he ate a little? One doesn't say that from now on he's already anyway lost, **"he completes his fast,"** he should continue completing his fast. What was done inadvertently is inadvertent. **"If he forgot and ate, he completes his fast,"** he should continue completing his fast. And he still says Aneinu.

This apparently means to say, right? Aneinu, it's called a fast. For example, let's say he undertook one day of fasting, he doesn't now have to make another day. This can be a person. There are those who have the text, it says "he completes his prayer and his fast," there are those who say not. Interesting.

What is it? It's certain, "he completes his fast" means everything. He can continue to say Aneinu. This is what he says, "he completes his fast." What should I tell you? I haven't yet seen other books, but when the Rambam says "he completes his fast" it means to say that nothing happened. You made a mistake, go on.

Something did happen, but it won't become simple. No, the Rambam doesn't tell me that he's now going to have to make another day. For example, a person undertook that he's going to fast one day. One doesn't say that he's now going to have to fast another day, because here it says "he completes his fast." Simply in the words of the Rambam, it implies that what happened in error is as if nothing happened.

Discussion: Connection to "Tasting Food"

Okay, now one is going to learn an interesting case, a very important law. That they learned, here you saw that it's a bit

more complicated. I think yes perhaps, it could be that the Rambam said the "forgot and ate" right after the "tasting food." It means like this, that when a person forgot about his fast that he's in the middle of a fast, and he properly ate a meal, then it could be like the others, other poskim say, you're right, because he didn't actually properly fast. It could be that the "forgot and ate" is like in the preparation. He was tasting something, he forgot and tasted something.

Okay, alright.

Law: Individual Who Fasted and the Sick Person Recovered / The Trouble Passed

The Rambam further, **"An individual who is fasting for a sick person."** What happens in such a case? An individual who is fasting for a sick person, thank God it helped **and he recovered** that the sick person became healed. Or **"for a trouble and it passed,"** the trouble went away.

I started to say an introduction to the end also, a very important thing. We learned earlier, that what is the idea, what is the logic of a fast, whether an individual fast or a communal fast, is that one fasts until they have mercy on them from Heaven. Now, therefore comes a very interesting question, what happens if the fasting succeeded too well?

This is the law. **"An individual who fasted for a sick person and he recovered,"** the sick person became healed. **"For a trouble and it passed,"** the trouble passed. **"He must complete his fast,"** he must continue completing his fast. Why? He made a vow. But the vow must be. The vow doesn't go away.

Laws of Fasting: Completing One's Fast, Local Custom, and the Order of a Fast Day

Law: Individual Who Fasted for a Sick Person and He Recovered — Completes His Fast

Therefore comes a very interesting question: what happens if one fasted and it succeeded too well, and they had mercy in the middle? This is the law: **An individual who fasted for a sick person and he recovered**, the sick person became healed, **for a trouble and it passed**, the trouble passed, **he must complete his fast**, he must continue completing his fast.

Why? He made a vow. The vow doesn't go away. Soon we'll see that there's also a reasoning for this. That what? It's very nice, Rashi in [tractate] one hundred and two, the first. Because Rashi says, it would look like he made a condition with the Creator, like Choni HaMe'agel, "I'm not leaving this circle unless..." And what's wrong? No, I mean that it means that... Soon we'll see that there's another matter involved.

Law: One Who Goes from a Place That Fasts to a Place That Doesn't Fast — The Stringencies of Both Places

Okay, a few more laws, and we'll see what the law is for a community. But a community is different, sometimes they do indeed change the fast.

One who goes from a place that fasts to a place that doesn't fast, meaning in the middle of a fast he traveled to a city where they're not fasting? Or vice versa? He says vice versa. He says, we already had regarding other laws, I know, about doing work on the eve of Pesach, one must follow the local custom. **He must fast and complete.** Meaning if he comes from where they fasted, he must finish his fast.

And if vice versa? **The stringencies of the place he left and the stringencies of the place he went to**, both stringencies. He must continue fasting because he's obligated, he became obligated in his place.

One who goes from a place that doesn't fast to a place that fasts, he went from a place where they're not fasting, he didn't start fasting, and now he's in a place where they're fasting, he should from now start fasting with them, he must join with the community, as it says "whoever afflicts himself with the community." There's something of a concept of being afflicted with the community.

Law: Forgot and Ate — Should Not Show Himself Before Them

The Rambam says further, forgot, a person came to a place where they're fasting, and he forgot that there's such a law, or he didn't know, he forgot and he ate, it doesn't mean that from now on he can continue eating. At least he shouldn't eat publicly with them, **he should not show himself before them**, he shouldn't eat in front of them. No, he shouldn't be satiated in front of them. Ah, he shouldn't be satiated with them. Everyone is hungry and thin and pale, he shouldn't come around like a fine Jew.

Because all those boundaries that were mentioned, they also shouldn't conduct themselves with broadness. It could be that the law is also, the reason for a fast that someone eats because he needs to and the like, he shouldn't go around showing off, understand? **He should not show himself before them**. This is simply causing pain to one's fellow, like all the laws of local custom, it's not humane.

Law: Community That Fasted for Rain and It Rained — Distinction Between Before Noon and After Noon

Now one can learn that this is different for an individual and a community. A community that fasted for rain. It's like this, **if before noon**, if before noon the rain already came, **they should not complete the fast**, they shouldn't complete the fast, but on the contrary, they start celebrating, **rather they eat and drink, gather together**, they come together, **and recite Hallel HaGadol**, they say Hallel.

Why? They say Hallel HaGadol is the "ki le'olam chasdo" or "malu olam chasdo"? **For one only says Hallel HaGadol with a satisfied soul and a full belly**. When the... interesting soul, it means to say the body. Yes, the person who is satiated, and a full belly. The animal soul. Very good.

Discussion: Question on Hallel HaGadol Shabbat Morning

It's a question on the Jews who say Hallel HaGadol Shabbat morning. Requires investigation. To justify the custom of Israel of those who eat Shabbat morning before praying, but he's not going to say Hallel HaGadol, you shouldn't say. It's already no word. If it says in the word. "Oleh HaShem ki tov" as if yes, are you now going to take away the pleasure of Shabbat from the Jews? Yes, we'll say it in the afternoon, after the cholent.

So the true tzaddikim said, how is it more appropriate for a satisfied soul and full belly than saying Hallel HaGadol? Already, one becomes satiated, one becomes satiated from the Hallel HaGadol. One says it actually at the end of the Seder. One doesn't say it at the beginning of the Seder, one says it at the end of the Seder when one is already more of a satisfied soul and full belly.

Discussion: Tehillim — Does One Say It as Prayer or as Study?

Speaker 1: What's the law? Is it a general law? When one says Tehillim, should one also only say it when one says... saying Tehillim is fake. It's not Tehillim. No, when one says it as Tehillim, it's not Hallel HaGadol, it's a part of saying Tehillim. I don't understand saying the entire Tehillim. Can you explain?

Tehillim is not a restaurant. Tehillim is a part of Torah, and a Jew wants to be able to learn Chumash, or he can say Tehillim. It's true, I saw a Jew... in my beit midrash. No, I don't want to say God forbid, not by me. In the beit midrash everyone is distinguished Jews. I saw a Jew while reading, he says Tehillim. I thought it was foolish. Because the Sages instituted that there is Torah and there is Tehillim, both are part of Torah.

I mean that saying Tehillim, an entire Tehillim at once is approximately like the Jew who used to say it's Yom HaShabbat, it's Yom Rosh Chodesh, it's Yom Chag HaMatzot.

Speaker 2: Why is it different from one who learns the entire book of Shmuel?

Speaker 1: If one learns, one learns, but Tehillim is a book of prayers. Do you want to pray learning? I agree, one can learn. What, make a class in Tehillim? Learn a class in Tehillim. You want to say pray Tehillim? It's a siddur that was written by King David already, to whom, however. It says, for Shabbat say this, for trouble say this, for thanksgiving say that.

You can do something, what do you do on Purim? The answer is that a Jew today can go through all the feelings in one day. And it could also be that there are people who say that on the High Holy Days there are so many piyutim in such a way as the Rambam says, "and the Holy One Blessed be He wanted to give merit to Israel, therefore He gave them much Torah and mitzvot." Because it will hit some mitzvah that works well for you. There are so many piyutim, you'll find one piyut that works for you.

Others had a different approach. On the contrary, say and say, and somewhere you'll catch on. Say a lot of Tehillim, because a person can't concentrate, but when a person says out the entire Tehillim, he has a few moments.

Speaker 2: Okay, is my hacking enough?

Speaker 1: No, you say, there were tzaddikim. Say a few chapters with intention. Say one chapter that has to do with your problem. If you don't know, there are indexes, in the back it says, for... there's even Tehillim that's organized.

I need to check where is the first time it says to say the entire Tehillim at once. I mean it's a recent thing. Doesn't count. After the later law, I'll say later. Okay, I'm just making a comment. I don't know, it's a later law, because I'm going to call your boy, he's more recent than you. Okay, that's how it goes. Okay, back, a community that says a sign for rain. Let's go back to the topic.

Speaker 2: No, there are different poskim who argue. What does it say that one may not say Hallel every day? What about one who says the entire Tehillim every day?

Speaker 1: I mean that one may not say the entire Tehillim. One must really check who is the first who says one should say the entire Tehillim at once, because it seems strange to me. It's as strange as someone who says the entire siddur every day, because Tehillim is a siddur. I don't understand the

distinction. Why? Why don't you say the entire siddur? It's also Torah.

One also can't say that Tehillim is part of Torah. There are those who learn Torah, and they learn one page, and they understand it well. And there are those who don't have the strength, they learn very much, and they learn very superficially, with great breadth. He learns Tehillim very superficially.

Ask yourself a question, is the siddur part of Torah?

Speaker 2: Tehillim is not Torah. Tehillim is... the siddur is not Torah, the siddur is a combination of prayer. Tehillim is one of the books of Writings. And the siddur is also... is one who has the... I have a custom to say... I have... it says that you say in the Rambam. It's the Torah. We learned in the Rambam the entire order of prayer.

Speaker 1: A pious Jew should say the entire siddur every day, three times, imagine. It's a normal person. You need to think for a second what he's saying. You say that we're confused today, you know why we're confused? Why are we confused? Why are we confused? Why are such strange things laid out like saying the entire Tehillim at once. That's why he's confused.

A normal person would understand that the Almighty hears when one says one verse that fits the place, then the Almighty hears, not that one says the entire Tehillim. So I have a new stringency, one should only say one verse or two or three, those that fit the situation, then the Almighty hears.

Okay, dear Jews who do say the entire Tehillim, go with you in a good way. I actually also have a hard time saying, saying, saying, because it's hard to reconcile. Well, indeed, Reb Nachman said one should say ten chapters. Okay, next.

Back to the Topic: Most of the Day Passed in Holiness

The Rambam says, the community... let's go back to the topic. We're dealing here in the middle like this: the community had... a trouble happened, rain isn't coming. And this started before noon. Before noon one shouldn't complete, but one should celebrate with Hallel. Therefore one should eat, one should make a meal. Yes.

This is from the Zohar **"and most of the day passed in holiness,"** holiness here means abstinence, separated from physicality. Service of God. We see here that a fast is not only a matter of repentance, there's also something of a level, it's something distinguished that he separated himself from physicality for one day. It can be simply so, because one sits in the beit midrash, one prays, one learns, as we'll see in the next section the order of a fast. It's a shame, you already had such a good elevated day, what should one do if there's no longer a reason for the fast?

You know what we'll finish? It's interesting, because the one who is before noon also completes, he goes together and says Hallel together. Yes, but that's not so long. So it seems. Okay, I'll tell you one by way of strengthening.

Law: Trouble That Passed — Dispute of the Rambam and the Ra'avad

The same thing, a trouble that passed, for a trouble, and it passed and passed, or for forced conversion, there was a decree of forced conversion, and it was annulled, the decree was annulled, then **if before noon they don't complete, if noon they complete.**

For a trouble one doesn't say Hallel HaGadol? Hallel HaGadol is a law specifically for rain? How does it look? One must already be able, one must say something else.

The Ra'avad disagrees. And Hallel HaGadol is something for rain? The Ra'avad says differently. The Ra'avad says that all troubles even a communal trouble, but the Ra'avad argues on the contrary, that it's only an exception for rain. Even a communal fast, the Ra'avad says, if it's just a trouble one should indeed complete, only a fast for rain.

And the Ra'avad says this, look what the Ra'avad says: **"She'ein tzara overet gemura ela tzarat hagashamim she'hi lish'ata"** (that there is no trouble that passes completely except the trouble of rain which is temporary). The Ra'avad argues, there's no such thing as "tzara overet" (a passing trouble). The persecution has passed? There's no such thing, in one minute the trouble goes away. There's no such thing. The only time it's possible is...

Speaker 2: The trauma from the decree still remained.

Speaker 1: Whatever, the king still... There's no such thing that it goes away in one minute, usually.

I see that someone says that in one of the Hallel HaGadol we say "noten lechem lechol basar" (He gives bread to all flesh).

Speaker 2: Yes, Rashi brings it.

Halacha: The Order of the Fast Day — Examining the Deeds of the City's People

Speaker 1: Rashi brings it. The Rambam goes further, **"bechol yom ta'anit"** (on every fast day). What does this mean, rabbosai (gentlemen), until now we knew that ta'anit (fast) means that one doesn't eat. Says the holy Rambam, no, no, no, I'll tell you what a ta'anit is.

Speaker 2: The Rambam, besides the fact that ta'anit means that one fasts and prays and gives in, one thinks that it's not a coincidence. What else does one do? How does one do it? What is the order?

Speaker 1: Let's see. **"Bechol yom ta'anit shegozrin al hatzibur mipnei tzara, beit din vehazekeinim yoshvin bebeit hakneset, bodkin al ma'asei anshei ha'ir me'achar tefilat shacharit ad chatzot hayom"** (On every fast day that is decreed upon the community because of trouble, the court and the elders sit in the synagogue, examining the deeds of the city's people from after the morning prayer until midday). It doesn't mean those who pray at ten, but back then...

Rambam Hilchot Ta'anivot Chapter 1 — The Order of the Day of a Public Fast

Halacha 17 — The Three Parts of a Fast Day

The Rambam's Description of the Order of the Day

Says the Rambam, besides the fact that ta'anit means that one fasts and prays, and each Jew thinks that it's not a coincidence, what else does one do? How does one do it? What is the order? Let's see.

"Bechol yom ta'anit shegozrin al hatzibur mipnei hatzara" (On every fast day that is decreed upon the community because of trouble), says the Rambam thus: **"Beit din vehazekeinim yoshvin bebeit hakneset, bodkin al ma'asei anshei ha'ir me'achar tefilat shacharit ad chatzot hayom"** (The court and the elders sit in the

synagogue, examining the deeds of the city's people from after the morning prayer until midday).

It doesn't mean those who pray at ten, because then you don't have much time. From tefilat shacharit, which is according to Chazal vatikin, yes, one prays early. So one has a good six hours to sit in the beit midrash, and the beit din sits, **"bodek al ma'asei anshei ha'ir"** (examining the deeds of the city's people). One checks what the people are doing, what's going on, what are our deeds. One does it in the beit kneset (synagogue). Usually in the beit kneset one doesn't do anything else except pray. This makes an assembly. Yes, one asks... Here one needs to inquire a bit. One asks the chevra (group) who go around in the streets and hear what's going on.

What Does One Do? — Correcting the Deeds

What does one do? **"Mesirin hamichsholot shel aveirot"** (They remove the stumbling blocks of sins). One takes away the obstacles that bring sins. That means, there are things that cause the community to stumble, one takes that away. **"Umazhirin vedorshin vechokrin al ba'alei chamas va'aveirot"** (And they warn and investigate and inquire about those who commit violence and sins), about the people who rob people, who cause sins, **"ve'al ba'alei zero'a, umafrishin otam"** (and about those who use force, and they separate them) - one removes them from their sins - **"umashpilin otam"** (and they humble them).

"Al ba'alei chamas mafrishin otam, al ba'alei zero'a umashpilin otam" (Those who commit violence they separate them, those who use force they humble them). There's a simple violent person. Nidui (excommunication) was upon one who acts arrogantly toward the heads of the holy people. One who is a ba'al zero'a (uses force), one must humble him by placing him in nidui perhaps, or one shames him a bit, one puts him down. **"Vechayotza badevarim elu"** (And similar to these things). Similar to this.

Yes, by the story of the people of Nineveh it also says that they returned the stolen property that they had in their hands. Yes, indeed. This is the Mishna. Yes. Very good. Here it fits very well with the Rambam that the ta'anit is not just so, but the ta'anit is the beginning of a cheshbon hanefesh (soul-searching) of tikun hama'asim (correcting the deeds).

From Midday to Evening — Torah Reading and Prayer

The Rambam, **"mechatzi hayom la'erev"** (from midday to evening), the second half of the day until night, is thus: **"Revi'a hayom korin beberachot uklalot shebaTorah"** (A quarter of the day they read the blessings and curses in the Torah). One reads the berachot uklalot shebaTorah (blessings and curses in the Torah). That means, it says there. Yes, yes, berachot means Torah. Does one mean specifically from Parshat Nitzavim? Yes, yes, written, and that means berachot baTorah (blessings in the Torah). Yes, that's what it means. And then it says "berachot uklalot" (blessings and curses). Berachot uklalot means berachot uklalot from... No, not necessarily "uchtevarthem" (and you shall write them). Berachot uklalot means what we call the tochecha (rebuke), the... the... the... **"Bechukotai"** or **"Ki Tavo"**. Yes?

No, I think perhaps the earlier things are things that are open, one takes his money. Those things, the curses, are what one does in secret, in secret, things that one can't do anything about. Berachot va'aririn, that means aririn (cursed). Okay, berachot va'aririn shebaTorah, one is aroused with the blessings. As it is said, **"Musar Hashem beni al tim'as**

ve'al takutz betochacho" (Do not despise the discipline of Hashem, my son, and do not be weary of His rebuke). You should not despise the Almighty's discipline, and you should not be ketz (weary), you should not become disgusted or bored from rebuke. You should take rebuke seriously.

Umaftirin banavi betochachot me'inyan hatzara (And they conclude with a prophet with rebukes related to the trouble). One concludes with a prophet also with rebukes that have to do with the trouble. If it's a drought, one finds a verse about drought. If it's a plague, one finds a verse about plague, and so on.

The Last Quarter of the Day — Mincha and Supplications

Urevi'a hayom ha'acharon (And the last quarter of the day), what does one do for the rest of the day? **Mitpalellin mincha** (They pray mincha), one prays mincha, **mitchanenim vezo'akim umitvodim kefi kocham** (they supplicate and cry out and confess according to their strength). "Kefi kocham" means that there's no fixed text according to what one understands. Mitchanenim vezo'akim means that one begs the Almighty. Mitvodim means further cheshbon hanefesh. Everything continues from the same order as it were. So prayer.

In other words, there are four parts of the day. Okay, shacharit doesn't count, it seems shacharit takes it quickly. After that, half a day, so there are three parts as it were. Half a day is the beit din occupied with making corrections, basically with returning the world in teshuva. After that half a day, then is the beit din over the people that one must lead. One brings in a few people and one shames the world.

Our Custom in Our Time

And our custom is to say "dirshu Hashem behimatzo" (Seek Hashem when He can be found). We don't follow this custom. This depends on how one learns in the Mishna. In the Mishna it says that on a ta'anit one reads berachot uklalot, and so on. But we understood that this is only on ta'anit geshamim (fast for rain) perhaps, but we conduct ourselves with all fasts, all fasts. I mean the Rambam also brought, what does Vayakhel say? Yes. That means, we don't go with the approach that one does teshuva, we go with the approach that one asks it from the Almighty. But perhaps ya'asu lifnei keseder hazeh (they should do it according to this order), that one does it in a better way.

I haven't yet heard ever that one should fulfill the halacha of sitting and examining ma'asei ha'ir (the deeds of the city), and the reason is because the Jew must first examine his own deeds. Yes, about this the Gemara says, tzei bedugma diyuna Yisrael (go out with the example of the judgment of Israel). Don't wait for the beit din to call over, first take care of the judgment yourself. I don't know what to say, it's a prompt, keshotam parshat etc., it's not so simple, one must do teshuva. Already. The ten ma'amarot of teshuva one should do teshuva.

You can simply say that this is only in a manner when there is a beit din that has a certain control, not that it was a Purim. But a ta'anit yachid (individual fast), perhaps one can learn from this. Imagine, yes, a rabbi now calls over the competitions rosh hakohol and holds him accountable. It must be a situation of a beit din, there is respect, there is the beit din has power.

A Lesson for an Individual — How One Can Apply This Order

But one can learn from this for oneself. That if a person accepts upon himself a ta'anit, or some other ta'anit dibur (fast of speech), I don't know, someone accepts upon himself in the holy days something, that half of the time he should learn and understand.

That means, there are three things that one should do. It's interesting, I want to learn from some general principle. There are two quarters, yes, there are three four quarters here of the day. Two quarters one should do practically, one quarter one should learn, seemingly one learns Torah in these matters, one understands better, and one quarter pray. Interesting... even making half such... only a quarter. Only a quarter is needed. Half of the portion that is for Hashem as it were. Half a day is practical, only one is there half a day.

It's interesting, because we in our time are stringent in fasts, but the whole matter we don't bring. No, it's surely the main thing seemingly. Or even Yom Kippur, perhaps if someone speaks half a day on Yom Kippur planning how to become better. I've already asked if this is the halacha. At least at night regarding our household affairs one does this, one mentions it at Ne'ila. One mentions it, it takes half a second to mention. What about... half a second? Someone who has exploitation should take the time, and he will think about it. They will give the time with what it takes.

Okay, enough learning. This is Chapter 1 of Hilchot Ta'anit. Wonderful.