



## Praying Outside

The beginning of *masechet Taanit* discusses the public fast days that were observed in a year when rain has not fallen. The first *perek* describes how the fasts and other prohibited practices increased in scope as time went on. The beginning of the second *perek* describes what happened in those most intense fast days. The first detail mentioned is that they would take the “*teiva*” – the *aron* with the *sefer Torah* – outside to the *rechova*, the public space, where they would gather to pray.

The *Bartenura* explains that they would take the *aron* outside to demonstrate how this private vessel was disgraced by their sins. The *Tifferet Yisrael* provides two explanations. The first is that they lament, that their actions brought about the draught, which thereby resulted in a reduction in Torah study. Alternatively, the more straightforward explanation is that their very sinful actions was a disgrace for the *Torah*, given the disregard for its *mitvot*.

The *Meiri* explains that that act was meant to shock people. They were meant to reflect on how something so precious and private became degraded. *Rashi* (*Taanit* 16a) however understand that the act was itself, taking the *aron* outside, was a form of *vidui* (confession), rather than a further act of degradation.

Interestingly, the *Mishnah Berurah* (579:2) appears to understand that the aim of taking the *aron* outside was so that they would *doven* there. He brings the two explanations of why they would pray outside (which we will see below) to explain why the *aron* was taken outside. This is unlike as we explained above that the act of taking the *aron* out had its own significance. Indeed, that is how the *Maharsha* explains the flow of the *Gemara*. The *Gemara* first asks why they prayed outside, then only after asks why the *aron* was taken outside. The *Maharasha* explains that praying outside alone is not enough of a reason to bring the *aron* outside, considering that they could pray there without it.

The *Maharsha* however adds that an alternative answer could have been offered. The *Gemara* explains that the reason why ash was placed on the *aron* was in line with the

*pasuk*, “... I am with him in distress” – that *Hashem* is with us in difficult times. That too could have been the reason offered for why the *aron* is taken outside. Based on this observation, we can explain that that the *Gemara* instead understood that the act was not done as another emotive device (like the *Meiri*). Instead, it was critical to the *teshuva* process, as an act of *vidui* (like *Rashi*).

The *Bartenura* also explains that they gather outside in the *rechova*, because since they were not answered when praying in private, they will degrade themselves by praying in public. This is the first answer provided by *R' Chiya bar Abba* in the *Gemara*. *Reish Lakish* however explains that the act of *galut*, being “exiled” from the *shul*, should act as an atonement for their actions. The *Gemara* explains that the practical difference between these two explanations is whether simply moving from one *shul* to a different *shul* would suffice. It would be an act of *galut*, but not public.

The *Ben Yehoyada* however asks, where is the disgrace in people gathering to pray to *Hashem*, even if it is outside? He explains that when *Bnei Yisrael* pray and are not answered, it is degrading in the face of the nations. They would question the *pasuk*, “for what nation is there so great, that has *Hashem* so near to them, as *Hashem* our G-d, whenever we call to him?” (*Devarim* 4:7) It was degrading when the prayers were unanswered in private. Now it will be even more so when we do so in public.

This understanding would be in line with the *Meiri* who adds that by going outside, “perhaps our hearts will be humbled, and our *teshuva* will be complete”. Similarly, the *R' Chananel* explains that going outside was intended to “break their hearts”.

However, turning to *Rashi's* explanation of *Reish Lakish's* that going outside was an act of *galut*, that act of *galut* itself was intended to atone. It is part of the process of *teshuva* itself. Consequently, we find these two understanding, whether it is a motivator or an act of *teshuva*, in this details as well.

**Revision Questions**

ראש השנה ד' ז' – ט'

- Can one climb a tree to retrieve a *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah*? (ד' ח') (ד' ח')
- Is one allowed to clean out a *shofar* with water or wine on *Rosh Hashanah*? (ד' ח')
- If one hears someone practicing blowing the *shofar*, have they fulfilled their obligation? (ד' ח')
- How many blasts must be heard on *Rosh Hashanah*? (ד' ט')
- How long is a *tekiya*? (ד' ט')
- How long is a *teruah*? (ד' ט')

תענית א' – ב' ה'

- From what date do we begin to recite “*mashiv ha’ruach u’morid ha’gashem*”? (א' א')
- When do we stop asking from rain? (א' ב')
- From what date do we begin to ask for rain? (Include both opinions) (א' ג')
- By which date do “individuals” begin fasting if rain has not yet fallen? (א' ד')
- How many fast days do these people undertake? (א' ד')
- By which date does *beit din* decree fast days on the public if rain has still not fallen? (א' ה')
- How many fast days does the *Beit Din* institute? (א' ה')
- If it still has not rained how many more fast days does the *Beit Din* institute and how do these differ from the previous ones? (א' ו')
- If yet again it still has not rained how many more fast days does the *Beit Din* institute and how do these differ from the previous ones? (א' ו')
- If it still has not rained, what else would everyone take upon themselves? (א' ז')
- Did anyone still fast during this period? (א' ז')
- If it eventually rained in *Nissan* was it considered positive? (א' ז')
- For the final set of fasts, where would they all gather? (א' ב')
- What would they put on their heads? (א' ב')
- According to the *Mishnah* what was the most vital component of the fast days? (א' ב')
- Who would they elect to lead them in the *tefillot*? (א' ב')
- How many *brachot* would they add to *sh'monah esrei*? (א' ב')
- What were these additional *brachot*? (א' ג')
- How did *R' Chalafta* and *R' Chananya ben Teradyon* end each of the additional *brachot* and how did the *kehillah* respond? (א' ה')
- What else did they do differently? (א' ה')

**Shiurim**

**ONLINE SHIURIM**

*Yisrael Bankier*  
mishnahyomit.com/shiurim

*Rabbi Reuven Spolter*  
mishnah.co

*Rabbi Chaim Brown*  
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

*Rabbi E. Kornfeld*  
*Rabbi C. Brown*  
http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calend  
ars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm

**APPS**

*Mishnah Yomit*  
mishnahyomit.com

*All Mishnah*  
Orthodox Union

*Mishna Yomi*  
Our Somayach, South Africa

*Kehati*

**SHIUR  
ON KOL HALOSHON**

*Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss*  
In US dial: 718 906 6400  
Then select: 1 – 2 – 4

**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
3 September י"ג אלול	4 September י"ד אלול	5 September ט"ו אלול	6 September ט"ז אלול	7 September ט"ח אלול	8 September ט"ט אלול	9 September כ"א אלול
Taanit 2:6-7	Taanit 2:8-9	Taanit 2:10-3:1	Taanit 3:2-3	Taanit 3:4-5	Taanit 3:6-7	Taanit 3:8-9

