דיני תיקון חצות

יז. ראוי לכל ירא שמים, שיהא מיצר ודואג, על חורבן בית המקדש. [ש"ע ס"ק]. ואמרו רז"ל (ברכות ג ע"א): "שלש משמרות הוי הלילה, ועל כל משמר ומשמר יושב הקדוש ברוך הוא ושואג כארי ואומר: אוי לבנים שבעונותיהם החרבתי את ביתי, ושרפתי את היכלי, והגליתים לבין אומות העולם". ולכן ראוי לכל ירא שמים שיהא מיצר ודואג באותה שעה ולשפוך תחנונים על חורבן בית המקדש כמו שנאמר (איכה ב, יט) קומי רני בלילה לראש אשמורות. [ב"י אות ב-ג בשם הרא"ש] **והמקובלים** האריכו מאוד בגודל מעלת קימת חצות, כי רבה היא. [משנ"ב ס"ק ט. ועי' כה"ח פלאגי' סי' ג באורך ובאחרון].

וראוי לכל אשר נגע ה' בלבו, לקונן בחצות הלילה על החורבן, ועל פיזור ישראל בין האומות, ועל גלות התורה והריגת הצדיקים. וכל מי שאפשר לו להשכים קום בחצות לילה טוב שיעשה

Day 10

Tikkun Hatzot

Joining God in mourning

17) Anyone who possesses genuine fear of Heaven will mourn regularly over the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*.[23] Our Sages taught (*Berakhot* 3a) that the night is divided into three time periods. At the junctures between these periods, the Blessed Holy One sits and roars like a [wounded] lion, saying, "Woe unto My children, for due to their sins I destroyed My house, burned my Sanctuary, and exiled [My children] to foreign countries." It is fitting for us to join God in lamenting these things at those times and to pray for the restoration of the *Bet Hamikdash*. This is the meaning of the verse (*Ekha* 2:19), "Rise, sing out at night at the beginning of each time period."

Although this is the teaching of the Talmud and it is the ruling of Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh*, the Kabbalists instructed us that it is more correct to rise at midnight for this purpose. See the footnote to halakha 25. Every devout Jew should rise at midnight or sometime afterward during the night to mourn and lament the destruction of the *Bet*

even though he realizes that by doing so he will not rise in the morning in time to recite the *Shema* within the time prescribed by the *Magen Avraham*. It is permitted if he will rise in time for the time limit prescribed by Harav Eliyahu of Vilna.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsum published in *Yalkut Yosef*, first edition page 98) ruled that it is incorrect to rely on the opinion of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna regarding the window of time for the morning *Shema*. One should also do one's best to recite it within the time prescribed by the *Magen Avraham* unless there is some emergency forcing one to delay reciting it. In such a case it is permitted since many communities have adopted the practice of relying on the opinion of Harav Eliyahu, as Harav HIDA testified. This seems to contradict the leniency forwarded by the *Yalkut Yosef*.

23. Torah study and prayer call for joy

Harav HIDA (*Mahazik Berakha*), cited in the *Mishna Berura* 1:10, explained that although we must mourn regularly for the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, we must be cheerful while studying Torah and praying. The *Ru'ah Hayim* Palachi (1:17) added that this is because our prayers substitute for the daily sacrifices that should be offered in the *Bet Hamikdash*, as our Sages taught in *Berakhot* (26b) and as Maran ruled in the *Shulhan Arukh* (98:4). In fact, our Sages taught (*Megilla* 16b) that prayer is even more exalted than the sacrifices or the act of constructing the *Bet Hamikdash*. Therefore, while praying there is no necessity to mourn the loss of the *Bet Hamikdash*.

כן ויאמר "תיקון חצות". וכל שכן אם נשאר ער עד חצות לילה, שיש להשתדל שלא ישן עד שיאמר תיקון חצות, ויהא מיצר בצער השכינה הנמצאת בגלות. [ילקו"י עמ' קמז]

יח. יש לשער זמן חצות הלילה לצורך אמירת "תיקון חצות" או "סליחות", שתים עשרה שעות רגילות אחר חצות היום. וחצות היום הוא בדיוק בחצי הזמן שבין זריחת השמש לבין שקיעתה. ואף לענין תפלת שחרית יש ללכת אחר זריחת השמש, ולא אחר עלות השחר. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' מו]

יט. בכל מקום בעולם, זמן נקודת חצות, מתחיל בשעת חצות הלילה של המקום ההוא. ואף שבארץ ישראל כבר הגיעה נקודת חצות, ימתינו באותו מקום לנקודת חצות שלהם. וראה בילקוט יוסף מהדורה אנגלית (ימים נוראים עמ' מט).

Hamikdash, the exile of our people and of the Torah, and the great tzaddikim who have been martyred throughout the centuries. The text of *tikkun hatzot* was compiled especially for this purpose. Certainly, if someone has remained awake until after midnight, he should make sure to recite *tikkun hatzot* and empathize with the suffering of the Shekhina before he goes to sleep.

When is midnight

18) The moment of midnight regarding *tikkun hatzot* and *selihot* is computed as exactly twelve clock hours after midday. Midday is defined as halfway between sunrise and sunset. We consider the moment of sunrise to be the beginning of the day; and this is the reason one should not recite the *Amida* of *shaharit* until after sunrise.[24]

Midnight around the world

19) Whereveron the globe one is located, the halakhic midnight is computed as midway between sunset and sunrise in that location. Even if it is already past midnight in the Land of Yisrael, people who live west of the Land must wait until it is midnight where they are located.[25] See the *Yalkut Yosef Yamim Nora'im English Edition*, page 49.

After midnight, one may recite *tikkun hatzot* any time until dawn.

---

24. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 46) ruled that one must not recite the *Amida* of *shaharit* until after sunrise, but if someone recited it any time after dawn he has fulfilled the mitzvah and need not repeat it. Likewise, in a situation where someone will not be able to pray after sunrise, he may recite it after dawn.

25. In *Yalkut Yosef Yamim Nora'im English Edition* (page 49) it was explained that the *Aharonim* debated this halakha. Some people report that Maran the Rishon Letziyon once ruled in public that it is permissible to recite *selihot* anywhere in the world after the moment of midnight in Yerushalayim, but this is an unreliable report.

The *Halakha Berura* (Vol. I, page 9) ruled that there is a halakhic basis to permit people in countries west of the Land of Yisrael to recite *tikkun hatzot* somewhat before midnight in their locale since it is after midnight in Yerushalayim. Although regarding other halakhot everyone must follow the solar timetable of his location, regarding *tikkun hatzot* there is room for leniency since the *Mikdash Melekh* cited Harav Menahem di Lonzano ruling that one may recite *tikkun hatzot* before midnight anywhere [even in the Land of Yisrael]. We do not follow this ruling in general, but for places west of the Land of Yisrael it makes more room for leniency.

דיני כוונה באמירת התחנונים

לה. טוב מעט תחנונים בכוונה, מהרבות בלא כוונה. [ש"ע ס"ג] וכמובן, שאם אם המרבה כיון גם כן, המרבה טוב יותר. [משנ"ב ס"ק יב]

ואם מי שממעט בתחנונים, יש לו אונס ואינו יכול להאריך, או שהוא משער בעצמו שאם יאריך לא יהיה יוכל לכוין, ולכן ממעט בתחנונים ואומרם בכוונה, נחשב לפני ה' יתברך כמו אותו שיש לו פנאי ומאריך בתחנונים בכוונה, ועל זה שנינו (מנחות קי ע"א) "אחד המרבה ואחד הממעיט, ובלבד שיכוין לבו לשמים". [שם]

Concentrating on the Meaning

Fewer might be better

35) [Many people have the practice of reciting various supplications and prayers, especially during the pre-dawn hours.] It is better to recite fewer supplications (extra, non-required prayers) while concentrating on their meaning than to recite many supplications without thinking about their meaning.[36] Of course, if someone is capable of reciting many supplications while concentrating on their meaning, that is best of all.

If someone recites a minimum of supplications because he has no time for more or because he knows that he will not be able to concentrate on their meaning if he recites lengthy prayers, God will reward him equally as if he had plenty of time and recited many supplications with full concentration. This is the meaning of our Sages' teaching (*Menahot*

until shortly before dawn, he should preface the *tikkun* with *vidui*. Since the two prayers are separated by several hours, it is permitted.

36. Regarding Torah study

The *Eliya Rabba* (1:5, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 1:29) wrote that this principle applies to Torah study as well. It is better, therefore, to study a limited amount of material and understand it well than to study a great deal of material with only a vague concept of its meaning. When a person comes before the Heavenly Court after he passes from this world, he is asked whether he studied Torah regularly, but he is not asked how much material he mastered. It is far better to study five chapters with a clear understanding than to study twenty chapters superficially. The *Mishna Berura* (1:12) added that the main thing is that each person do his best in studying Torah. Each person should study it in the manner most productive for his intellect and personality.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 111) commented that it is permissible for someone to sleep well all night and eat full meals so that he will be fully alert and be able to apply all his powers of concentration in his Torah studies. This is superior to denying oneself food and sleep and then having no strength to study with deep concentration.

Torah study vs. reciting supplications

The *Aharonim* (cited in the *Mishna Berura* 1:12) stated that someone who is capable of deep and involved Torah study should limit the time he spends reciting extra, non-essential prayers and supplications so that he can devote that time to Torah study. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (1:31) stated that although the rabbis have instituted many different programs for daily Torah study, these programs are meant for those people who need such a regimen, who would waste their time with frivolities were it not for these programs. True Torah scholars, however, need not follow these programs since they are fully capable of devoting themselves to deep Torah research all the time. The Arizal maintained a very short daily Torah program, freeing the rest of the day for serious Torah research.

The *Mishna Berura* added, citing Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef*) and the *Haye Adam*, that everyone must set aside some time each day to study *mussar*. Every person has to

לו. האר״י ז״ל לא התפלל בקול רם, אפילו הזמירות, להורות הכנעה ואימה ויראה לפני ה׳. וביום שבת מרים מעט קולו בנעימה בתפלה דמיושב, לכבוד שבת. [שעה״כ הו״ד בבא״ח פ׳ מקץ ה״ו, ובכה״ח ס״ק כז. וע״ע משנ״ב סי׳ קא סק״ז]

פרשת העקידה

לז. קודם שהאדם יסדר תפלתו מפרשת העקידה ואילך, צריך לקבל עליו מצות ״ואהבת לרעך כמוך״, לאהוב כל מבני ישראל כנפשו, כי על ידי זה תעלה תפלתו כלולה מכל תפלות ישראל, ותוכל לעלות למעלה ולעשות פרי. [שער הכוונות הו״ד בכה״ח ס״ק כח]

110a), "Both he who accomplishes much and he who accomplishes little are equally rewarded, as long as each one directs his heart toward serving God."

Praying silently

36) The Arizal recited all the daily prayers, including the daily psalms, silently. This was his way of expressing his humility and awe of God. On Shabbat, he raised his voice somewhat to sing the prayers in honor of the holy day.[37]

Day 11

Reciting *Akedat Yitzhak*

Mitzvah to love all Jews

37) Before beginning the *shaharit* prayers, it is important to consciously agree to fulfill the mitzvah of *ve'ahavta lere'akha kamokha*, to love all the people of Yisrael. Through feeling this unconditional love without exception, one clears the way for one's prayers to be included with those of the entire nation, and they will be accepted in Heaven favorably.[38]

---

battle the *yetzer hara*, and the greater a person is, the harder his *yetzer hara* will struggle to bring him to sin. The antidote for the *yetzer hara* is to study our Sages' words extolling the traits of piety.

37. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 112) added that some people always recite the psalms, the *Shema* and its blessings out loud and with great enthusiasm in order to help them concentrate on the words that they recite. Regarding this as well, each person should act in the manner that helps him serve God and honor Him the most. See below in *Siman* 48 about the practice of swaying one's body back and forth while praying.

38. These instructions are found in the *Sha'ar Hakavanot*. It is stated there that one must reserve the highest degree of love for those with whom one studies Torah, as if each one of them is a part of one united body. If any member of one's study group is beset by health issues or problems in his household, one must make sure to have him in mind whenever one prays.

Honesty in one's prayers

One might challenge this halakha, saying that it is forbidden to make this declaration unless one genuinely loves every Jew. If one does not, the declaration would be a lie. Harav Hayim Palachi (*Kaf Hahayim* 20:1) offered another example of this concept. He complained that since we state in the *arvit* prayer, "we speak words of Torah day and night," if someone has spare time each day and he wastes it instead of studying Torah, he is guilty of lying every day.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya Yamim Nora'im* page 19) dealt with a similar issue. In the *selihot*, we declare, "Place my tears in Your flask," and "I will offer my tears to you as a libation." Several *Aharonim* pointed out that if someone does not cry at all, he is lying when he says