

Inside the Daf

In times of drought, the community fasts three series of fasts. The final series of fasts has seven days of fasting. Not only are eating and drinking not allowed on these days, but there are other restrictions, too (see pg. 45). רב יהודה says that we also blow the שופר horn on these seven days. Rashi explains that we blow the שופר to recall יהושע's (Joshua) siege of Jericho. At Jericho the שופר was sounded and the walls to the city collapsed allowing for an Israelite victory. By blowing the שופר on these seven fast days we ask Hashem to answer our prayers the way He answered our ancestor's prayers at Jericho when the walls collapsed.

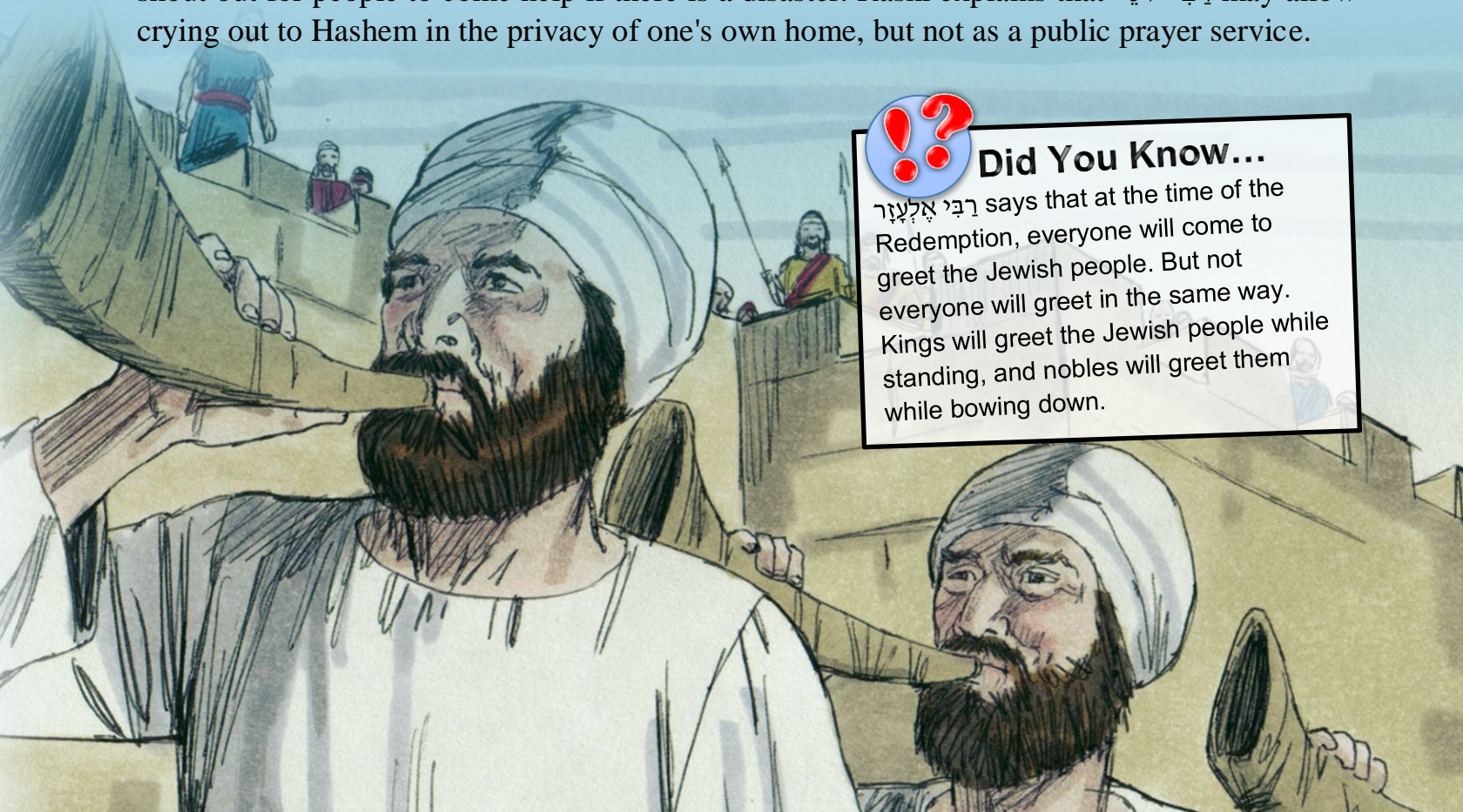
A ברייתא teaches that there are times of trouble when we do not sound the שופר in prayer but we cry out, instead. For example, a plague of itching or one of locusts, flies, wasps, hornets, snakes or scorpions are events for which we cry out to Hashem.

According to רבי יוסי, on the Sabbath, we do not cry out to Hashem in prayer, but we may shout out for people to come help if there is a disaster. Rashi explains that רבי יוסי may allow crying out to Hashem in the privacy of one's own home, but not as a public prayer service.



Did You Know...

רבי אֶלְעָזָר says that at the time of the Redemption, everyone will come to greet the Jewish people. But not everyone will greet in the same way. Kings will greet the Jewish people while standing, and nobles will greet them while bowing down.



Prayer Gestures

A Moment

"I have an idea, rabbi," said the synagogue president. "You know how we want to build a large new social hall for weddings and other events? Well, how about you announce to the congregation how important it is to donate money to this important cause and that everyone should donate whatever he or she can?"

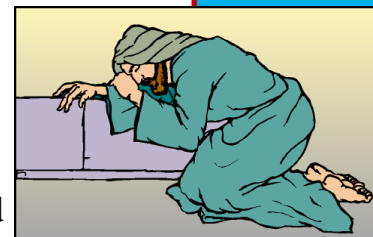
"I don't think that would be appropriate," said the rabbi. "You see, in the days of the Talmud, community fasts were undertaken when a major disaster threatened the community.

רבי says, no more than thirteen fasts could be decreed upon the community. Why not? So as not to trouble the community too much and cause them too much hardship by fasting. We see that, whatever our problems are, the community should not be caused too much pain to solve them. There are plenty of other more important causes for the congregation to donate to than a new social facility."



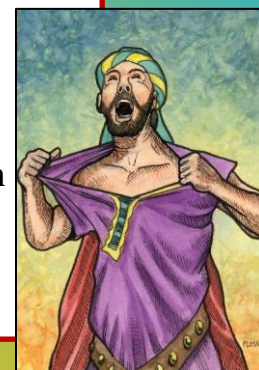
We have heard of fasting and praying when we are in distress. But there are other actions that people have done by people in times of need.

The prophet יהושע (Joshua) fell on his face in prayer after the defeat of the city of Ai. After this, Hashem told him to rise and conquer the land. רבי אֶלְעָזָר says that an important person should not fall on his face in prayer in public unless he is sure he will be answered like יהושע was. Otherwise, people will mock him if his prayer goes unanswered.



יהורם (Jehoram, son of Ahab) wore sackcloth when a famine struck in his days (see מלכים ב', ו, ל, II Kings 6,30). Hashem answered his prayers. Here, too, רבי אֶלְעָזָר says an important person should not wear sackcloth unless he knows he will be answered as יהורם was.

יהושע and כָּלֵב (Caleb) tore their clothes in prayer to ask for Hashem's mercy (see במדבר יד, ה, Num. 14,5).



Games

תענית דף י"ד – Review Questions

1. Why do we blow the שופר some public fast days?

2. What did יהושע (Joshua) do while he prayed after the defeat of Ai?

3. How will kings and nobles greet the Jewish people at the Redemption?

