

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem...”

קהילת תורת אמת

Congregation Torat Emet

The Main Street Synagogue

Guide for the Three Weeks & Tisha B'Av

An Halakhic How-To
5776 / 2016

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SCHEDULE FOR THREE WEEKS, 5776

CONGREGATION TORAT EMET

Sunday, July 24th, 17th of Tammuz

- 5:11 am Fast Begins
8:00 am Shacharit
8:25 pm Mincha, followed by shiur to
prepare for the Three Weeks
9:39 pm Fast ends

Shabbat, August 13th

- 2:15 pm Mincha – Make sure to eat
Seudah Shlisheet at home
before the fast begins!
8:30 pm Tisha B'Av Fast Begins
9:14 pm Shabbat Ends, Havdalah
See instructions on p. 9 below
9:30 pm Maariv, followed by **Eichah**
10:30 pm Special Teen Program

Sunday, August 14th, Tisha B'Av

- 8:00 am Shacharit with **Kinot**
11:00 am Shiur, Rabbi Joel Epstein
1:36 pm *Chatzot*
2:30 pm Early Mincha
4:00 pm Chofetz Chaim Foundation
Video featuring Rabbi Pesach
Krohn and Rabbi Yissocher
Frاند
5:00 pm Video - TBA
8:00 pm Mincha / Ma'ariv
9:12 pm Fast Ends

Introduction

Temple worship was established in the Tabernacle as the Jewish people made their steady advance toward the Land of Israel after their Exodus from Egypt. From that time on for nearly a thousand years, the mainstay of Jewish service to God, and the hallmark of the very continuity of our Jewish heritage, was the daily morning and afternoon offerings known as the **קרבנות תמיד** – the *Continual Sacrifices*.

As the Jews grew from a nation of slaves to a Mesopotamian power, not a single day passed when the Continual Sacrifices were not offered morning and afternoon, day in and day out.

But in 586 B.C.E, Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar II laid siege to Jerusalem, and on the 17th day of Tammuz (Shiv'a Asar Be-Tammuz) that year, the supply of livestock in the barricaded city finally ran dry. For the first time since they were instituted in the shadow of Mt. Sinai, the Continual Sacrifices were discontinued.

On the 9th day of Av (Tisha B'Av) that year, the Babylonian army set fire to Solomon's Holy Temple, and it burnt to the ground that night and all day on the 10th of Av.

Hundreds of years later, long after the Temple had been rebuilt, Romans led by Titus again laid siege to Jerusalem, breaching the walls of the Holy City on none other than the 17th day of Tammuz, and ultimately destroying the Temple on the 9th day of Av.

Because of these terrible tragedies and many others that surround these dates in Jewish history, the entire time period from 17 Tammuz to 9 Av is a time of great mourning and sadness for the Jewish people. These three weeks are called **בין המצרים** – *bein hametzarim*, a temporal space squeezed narrow by the dates of oppression that surround it.

The following is a guide to help us understand and maintain the practices of mourning and commemoration that help us bring to life the most devastating dates on our religious calendar.

May the Jewish people know no more suffering, and may the Messiah return us to our homeland, and our service to the Holy Temple. May the streets of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount be rebuilt speedily in our days.



Part I – THE THREE WEEKS

Dates and Times

On This year, the 17th day of Tammuz (Shiv'a Asar BeTammuz) falls out on Shabbat, July 23rd, 2016. Because mourning and fasting is prohibited on Shabbat, though, the fast is pushed off to Sunday, July 24th, and the practices of mourning do not begin until after Shabbat on July 23rd.

At that time, the Jewish people will begin a period of mourning that will last for three weeks. In order to concretize our mourning and make it real for us, the *halakhah* requires us to observe the following practices.

Mourning Practices during the Three Weeks

The following prohibitions and practices apply equally to men and women. Children from the age of six should be trained in these practices as well.

1. **Weddings:** We are not allowed to get married during this time period. Getting engaged, however, is permitted. Before Rosh Chodesh Av (see “The Nine Days,” below), we are allowed to celebrate engagements at small parties, as long as there is no dancing or music.
2. **Music:** We do not listen to music during this time period. We also avoid attending entertaining events where music is central to the program. Professional musicians whose critical source of income is from playing music may continue to play music during the Three Weeks.
3. **Haircuts:** We do not cut hair during this time period, so haircuts should be taken before the Three Weeks begin. There is debate about shaving, however, so Rabbi Zack should be consulted if you do not know your *minhag*, or if being unshaven will negatively impact your standing at work.
4. **Making important purchases and reciting Shehechyanu:** During this period, we do not recite the *berachah* of *Shehechyanu* or purchase important items like new clothing or significant household furnishings. We also do not buy or eat a new fruit, or wear new clothing regardless of when it was purchased. It is, however, permitted to wear new clothing on Shabbat. If there is a critical need for new clothing, then it may be purchased only to satisfy the critical need.



Tragedies that Befell the Jewish People on Shiv'a Asar BeTammuz

- Moshe broke the miraculous tablets crafted by God at Mount Sinai in response to the sin of the Golden Calf.
- As Jerusalem lay under siege from the Babylonians, the Kohanim could no longer obtain sacrificial animals, so for the first time in nearly a thousand years, the *korbanot tamid* (continual offerings) were discontinued.
- Romans defiled the Holy Temple to humiliate and suppress the Jews, placing an idol in the Sanctuary of the Temple.
- The Roman army breached the walls of Jerusalem on its way to destroying the Second Temple.
- The Roman general Apostamos publicly burnt a Torah scroll.

Part II - THE NINE DAYS

Dates

The period of time from the first day of the Hebrew month of Av until the ninth day of Av (Tisha B'Av) is known as the Nine Days. Because of its proximity to Tisha B'Av, we increase our mourning during these Nine Days, and we increase the way we practice our mourning over and above the prohibitions of rest of the Three Weeks.

This year, the first day of Av (Rosh Chodesh Av) falls out on Friday, August 5th, 2016. In order to concretize our mourning during the Nine Days and make it real for us, the *halakhab* requires us to observe the following practices.

Mourning Practices during the Nine Days

The following prohibitions and practices apply equally to men and women. Children from the age of six should be trained in these practices as well.

1. **Construction:** We do not perform any major construction or decorating in our homes that can be postponed until after Tisha B'Av without incurring substantial financial losses. If our homes would suffer damage, however, even major repairs are permitted. Please contact Rabbi Zack if you are unsure about the *halakhic* status of a project on your home.



2. **Wine and Meat:** It is forbidden to consume wine or meat during the Nine Days. This is because wine and meat were central to our worship in the Beit HaMikdash, and it is too devastating to eat them during this time, knowing that we are no longer able to perform our service in the Temple. There are two exceptions to this rule.
 - a. **Shabbat:** Wine may be used for Kiddush on Shabbat and at Shabbat meals. *Havdalah*, however, occurs after Shabbat, so grape juice should be used and then given to a child to drink. If there is no child, then the adult making *havdalah* may drink the juice.
 - b. **Siyyum:** One who finishes learning a tractate of Talmud, a tractate of Mishnah with commentary, or a book of Tanakh is allowed to celebrate his or her great accomplishment with a festive meal at which anyone who meaningfully participated in the learning may consume wine or meat.
3. **Laundering:** During this time, it is forbidden to clean clothing, bed linens, and table clothes, even through the participation of a non-Jew. Clothing may not be tailored or repaired during this time either. There are two exceptions to this prohibition:
 - a. If all of one's clothing is soiled, then one may clean what is minimally required.
 - b. The clothing of young children may be cleaned.
4. **Wearing freshly laundered clothing:** Freshly laundered clothing, except undergarments, may not be worn during the Nine Days. If clothing is worn for even for a few minutes, it is no longer considered freshly laundered. So one should briefly wear all the clothing needed for the Nine Days before Friday, August 5th, 2016. However, one may wear Shabbat clothing, even if it is freshly laundered, on Shabbat.
5. **Bathing:** If one normally bathes on a daily basis, and would actually be in extreme discomfort forgoing that luxury, then one may shower briefly with cold water or wash one part of the body at a time in cold water. Also, it is permitted to wash one's body with hot water on Erev Shabbat (Friday, August 5th, and Friday, August 12th).

Part III – TISHA B'AV

Dates and Times

This year, the ninth day of Av (Tisha B'Av) falls out on Shabbat, August 13th, 2016. Because mourning and fasting is prohibited on Shabbat, though, the fast is pushed off. It starts on August 13th at 8:30 pm (slightly before the official end of Shabbat, which is at 9:14 pm), and it ends on August 14th at 9:12 pm.

In order to concretize our mourning on Tisha B'Av and make it real for us, the *halakhah* requires us to observe the following practices.

Mourning Practices of Tisha B'Av

The following prohibitions and practices apply equally to men and women. Children from the age of six should be trained in these practices as well, except for fasting. Young children are not allowed to fast. Children within a year of becoming a *bar-* or *bat-mitzvah* should be encouraged to fast to the best of their ability.

1. **Fasting:** We do not eat or drink from August 13th at 8:30 pm to August 14th at 9:12 pm.

If one is ill, must take medication, is pregnant, or is nursing, please call Rabbi Zack for a personal consultation.

2. **Leather Shoes:** We do not wear leather shoes for the entirety of Tisha B'Av. Many sneakers and sandals contain leather, and even small amounts of leather render shoes forbidden of use, so be careful to check in advance that you have shoes that are entirely non-leather.
3. **Bathing and Washing:** It is forbidden to bathe or wash any part of the body, even one's hands. One may, however, rinse off visible dirt.
4. **Perfumes and Ointments:** We do not wear perfume or any ointment on Tisha B'Av. To remove body odor, however, deodorant may be worn.
5. **Marital Relations:** Because of the seriousness of the day, marital relations are prohibited for the duration of Tisha B'Av.

6. **Torah Learning:** Because the Beit Hamikdash was the center of Torah observance for the Jewish people, we do not study most parts of the Torah on Tisha B'Av. However, one may study the book of Iyyov (Job), prophecies pertaining to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, the laws of mourning, and Talmudic passages that relate to mourning or to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.
7. **Greeting People:** On Tisha B'Av, just as in a house of mourning, it is forbidden to greet people. Just as mourners who are too distracted by their loss to engage in casual interactions or to desire social company, we walk through the day in a haze of loss and sadness.

If one is greeted by someone else accidentally, or because the other person does not know the *halakhab*, then it is important to avoid embarrassing that person. A minimal greeting should be returned in a mournful manner.

8. **Sitting on Chairs:** Just like mourners in a *shiva* house, we do not sit on chairs on Tisha B'Av. Instead, we sit on low stools or on the floor because the history of the day has knocked us to the ground in grief. Likewise, we do not sleep in our beds as we usually do. Many people sleep on the floor, on a mattress on the floor, or at least without a pillow. After *chatzot* at 1:36 pm, it is permissible to sit normally on chairs.
9. **Business and Work:** Business transactions and work should be avoided for the entire duration of Tisha B'Av. In a case of need, however, work may be done after *chatzot* at 1:36 pm.
10. **Talit and Tefillin:** Men do not wear their *talitot* or *tefillin* on the morning of Tisha B'Av. Instead, they are worn at Mincha later in the day. The *talit katan*, however, should be put on in the morning, only without reciting a *beracha*.
11. **Eichah:** Ma'ariv (the evening service) on Tisha B'Av night is followed by a public reading of the book of Eichah (Lamentations) and an assortment of Kinot (elegies). The curtains from the Ark and the covers from the Shulchan will be removed, and the lights of the shul will be dimmed because light and glory have been stripped from the Jewish people.
12. **Kinot:** These mournful elegies are read both at night and in the morning, lamenting many of the terrible tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people.

After Shabbat ... Special Procedures for Tisha B'Av Night

Seudah HaMafseket: Under normal circumstances, Tisha B'Av immediately commences after the *Seudah HaMafseket* (The Closing Meal), which is eaten just before sunset in most years. This year, however, because Tisha B'Av starts right after Shabbat, there is no *Seudah HaMafseket*. Instead, one should eat a large but quiet *seudah shelisheet* at home, stopping by 8:30 pm for the start of the fast.

Changing shoes: In most years, one changes into shoes appropriate for Tisha B'Av before the start of the fast. This year, however, because it is not permissible to prepare on Shabbat for a later time, and because outward displays of mourning are prohibited on Shabbat, we do not take off our Shabbat shoes until Shabbat ends at 9:14 pm. Also, because it is prohibited to prepare on Shabbat for a later time, one may not bring Tisha B'Av shoes to shul on Shabbat itself. Everyone must either bring Tisha B'Av shoes to shul before the start of Shabbat on Friday, August 12th, or after the end of Shabbat.

Havdalah: This year, *havdalah* is recited on Saturday night, August 13th, after 9:14 pm, only over a candle, omitting both spices and wine from the ceremony. At the end of Tisha B'Av on August 14th, after 9:12 pm, *havdalah* is again recited, this time only over wine, omitting both spices and the candle.

Havdalah will be recited at shul between Ma'ariv and Eicha for everyone in attendance. Therefore, those coming to shul should not make *havdalah* at home. Instead, those coming to shul should state the following declaration immediately when Shabbat ends (at 9:14 pm). After this recitation, one may change into Tisha B'Av shoes and drive to shul for Ma'ariv and Eicha:

ברוך המבדיל בין קדש לחול.

Baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-chol.

Blessed is the One who distinguishes between holy and profane.

Eicha: After Shabbat ends, we will recite Ma'ariv (the evening service), followed by a public reading of the book of Eicha (Lamentations) and an assortment of Kinot (elegies). The curtains from the Ark and the covers from the Shulchan will be removed, and the lights of the shul will be dimmed because light and glory have been stripped from the Jewish people.

After Tisha B'Av

Normally, the practices of mourning we keep during the Nine Days still apply until *chatzot* (midday) on the tenth day of Av, the day after Tisha B'Av. This is because the First Temple was set alight on Tisha B'Av, but it continued to burn through the night and into the next day.

This year, however, Tisha B'Av falls out on Shabbat, so we observe it on the next day, the tenth of Av. Therefore, one may shave, bathe, clean clothing, listen to music, etc. immediately after the end of Tisha B'Av on August 14th, at 9:12 pm.

However, the prohibition against consuming meat or wine still applies until Monday morning, August 15th.

Tragedies that Befell the Jewish People on Tisha B'Av

BCE

- 1314 Sin of the spies and the decree to wander in the desert for forty years.
- 586 The destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar.

CE

- 70 The destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans under Titus.
- 135 Bloody suppression by the Romans of the Bar Kochba revolt.
- 136 The plowing of the site of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor Trajan, intended to be symbolic of the final destruction of the Jewish State.
- 1290 Expulsion of the Jews from England by decree of King Edward.
- 1306 Expulsion of the Jews from France, announced by Philip IV, The Fair.
- 1492 Expulsion of the Jews from Spain.
- 1555 Issuance of severe decree against the Jews by Paul IV, forcing them to dwell in undesirable quarters in Rome (Ghetto).
- 1630 Expulsion of the Jews from Mantua, Italy by Ferdinand I.
- 1670 Banishment of Jews from Vienna by decree of Emperor Leopold I.
- 1929 Arab massacre of Jews beside the Wailing Wall.
- 1933 Burning, on Hitler's orders, of the oldest synagogue in Berlin.