



Laws and Customs: 17th of Tammuz & Three Weeks

For the year 5776 - Hakhel

According to Minhag Chabad
All times listed are for Melbourne only

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🌀 HAKHEL

The *Gemoro* states that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed during "Motzei Shvi'is" – the year after *Shemithah*. The Rebbe explains that the year was not explicitly described as *Hakhel*, because the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* is the exact opposite of what *Hakhel* stands for.

It is thus understood that the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash* will be hastened through an increase in the activities of *Hakhel*. Every opportunity should be utilised to conduct both large and small *Hakhel* gatherings, in order to foster greater *Achdus*, as well as to increase the study of *Torah* and the fulfilment of *Mitzvos* – especially the giving of *Tzedakah*.

🌀 THREE WEEKS

Being that the 17th of *Tammuz* falls on *Shabbos* this year, there is uncertainty as to whether the period of the Three Weeks begins on *Shabbos* or only after *Shabbos*.

During each *Shabbos* of the Three Weeks, care is taken not to display any signs of mourning. In fact, one should be even more joyous than usual.

During the Three Weeks, the following activities are forbidden:

- Haircuts – even an *Opshernish*. (Other practices associated with an *Opshernish* – such as training the child to wear *Tzitzis* and recite *Brochos*, *Shma* and *Bentching* – should not be deferred.)
- Weddings.
- Eating new fruit, unless for health purposes. This prohibition applies even on *Shabbos*. However, some authorities permit this on *Shabbos* 17th *Tammuz*.
- Wearing new clothing other than underwear or socks. This prohibition applies even on

Shabbos. However, some authorities permit this on *Shabbos* 17th *Tammuz*.

- Buying new clothing (other than underwear or socks) if they can be purchased later at the same price.
- Listening to live music.

The following activities should be avoided:

- Listening to recorded music for enjoyment or festive purposes.
- Travelling for leisure. If travelling is necessary, it is appropriate to at least begin one's preparations (such as beginning to pack) beforehand.
- Non-urgent medical procedures.
- *Siyum Sefer Torah*.

The following activities are permitted:

- Engagement *L'Chaims* (without music or dancing).
- Cutting nails.
- A man may trim his moustache if it interferes with eating. Similarly, a woman may groom or wax her eyebrows etc.

During these days, it is appropriate to increase one's *Torah* studies, with special focus on the *Halachos* of the Three Weeks, as well as learning about the *Beis Hamikdash* (e.g. chapters 40-48 of *Yechezkel*, tractates *Middos* and *Tomid*, and *Hilchos Beis Habechira* in the *Rambam*).

It is appropriate to give increased amounts of *Tzedakah*, especially towards the upkeep of a *Mikdash Me'at* (e.g. a *Shule* or *Beis Midrash*).

See separate [Halacha Guide](#) for laws and customs of the Nine Days.

🌀 SHIVAH ASSAR B'TAMMUZ

Five tragedies occurred on this day:

- The first set of the *Luchos* were broken.
- The daily *Avoidah* was discontinued three weeks before

the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

- The walls of *Yerushalayim* were breached three weeks before the second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed.
- The Roman general *Apostomus* burned the *Torah*.
- A graven image was placed in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

🌀 EATING PRIOR TO THE FAST

One may eat and drink the entire evening until dawn (6:04am), provided that **either** of these conditions are met:

- One didn't go to sleep for the night. [Dozing off is not regarded as such.]
- One stipulated (preferably verbally) before going to sleep that he would eat upon awakening. In this case, one washes *Neggel Vasser* and recites the morning *Brochos* before eating.

🌀 WHO MUST FAST?

Since the fast this year is *Nidche* (deferred), a *Chosson* and *Kallah* (during the week of *Sheva Brochos*) and the *Baalei Habris* (i.e. the *Mohel*, the *Sandek*, and the father of the baby) should consult with a *Rav*.

If one inadvertently ate during the fast, one must immediately resume fasting.

Mothers who are pregnant or nursing, or have difficulty fasting while tending to their young children, should consult with a *Rov*. [One shouldn't be unduly strict in this regard, so as not to harm the wellbeing of mother and baby.] The ill/elderly should also consult with a *Rav*.

Anyone below *Bar/Bas Mitzvah* need not fast. From the age of nine upwards, the custom is to train

children to fast for several hours, as per the child's abilities.

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid delicacies or excessive intake. Similarly, children who are old enough to understand the concept of a fast day should avoid delicacies.

🕊️ LAWS OF FASTING

One shouldn't brush one's teeth or rinse one's mouth. [If this will cause great aggravation, there is room to be lenient, provided that one leans forward to prevent any liquid from flowing down one's throat; that one uses substances unfit for consumption (e.g. Listerine); and that one rinses with less than 86 ml.]

One may take non-chewable pills for medical purposes, without water. A *Rav* should be consulted regarding other medications.

One may shower, bathe and apply ointments and creams.

When a *Bris* occurs on a fast, the *Seudah* takes place on the night following the fast.

One may touch food and engage in its preparation.

One may not taste food to determine whether it requires salt/spices. However, when preparing food for a *Seudas Mitzvah* scheduled for the night immediately following the fast, one may taste the food, provided that all these conditions are met:

- One expels it without swallowing.
- One tastes only an absolute minimum.
- One does not taste more than 86 ml in total throughout the day.

🕊️ CONDUCT ON A FAST DAY

One should learn *Torah* connected to the topic of the fast.

The *Rebbe* instructed that one learn the passages of *Nevi'im* which are associated with the fast of the 17th of *Tammuz*. These can be found in *Melachim II* 25:3-8, *Yirmiyahu* 39:2-7 and *Zecharya* 8:18-19.

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *davening*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals

– especially if one is exempt from fasting.

The purpose of fasting is to make a *Cheshbon Hanefesh* (reckoning of one's deeds) and arouse one to do *Teshuvah*. Idling away one's time, or partaking in joyous or entertaining activities, is not in the spirit of the fast.

One should be especially careful not to become angered.

🕊️ CHAZZAN'S ANEINU

During *Shacharis*, only the *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu*. Therefore, one who is not fasting (or who anticipates that he won't be able to finish the fast) shouldn't serve as *Chazzan*.

[In the unlikely event that the *Chazzan* is not fasting, or less than three congregants are fasting: Instead of reciting *Aneinu* between *Goel Yisroel* and *R'faeinu*, the *Chazzan* includes *Aneinu* in the *Brocho* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, and concludes the *Brocho* regularly; i.e. *Shomea Tefillah*.]

A *Chazan* who forgot to recite *Aneinu*:

- if he remembered before reciting *Hashem's* name at the conclusion of the *Brocho* of *R'foeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* immediately, and then repeats the *Brocho* of *R'foeinu*;
- if he already concluded the *Brocho* of *R'foeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* in the *Brocho* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, and concludes the *Brocho* with a double conclusion; i.e. *Ha'one B'eis Tzara V'shomea Tefillah*;
- if he already concluded the *Brocho* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, he recites *Aneinu* as a separate *Brocho* immediately after the *Brocho* of *Sim Shalom*.

🕊️ SELICHOS & AVINU MALKEINU

One who is not fasting must still recite *Selichos* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.

One who *davens* without a *Minyan* omits the *Yud-Gimel Midos-Harachamim*.

If *Tachnun* is not recited (e.g. when a *Chosson* or one of the *Baalei Habris* are present), *Selichos* is still recited, whereas *Avinu Malkeinu* is not recited. [However, the *Baalei Habris* do not recite *Selichos*.]

🕊️ TORAH READING

The passage of *Vayechal* is read, provided that at least three congregants are fasting.

One who is not fasting (or who anticipates that he won't be able to finish the fast) must still hear *Krias Hatorah* of *Vayechal*, but should not be called up for an *Aliya*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and refusing the *Aliya* will cause him embarrassment and minimize the honour of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliya*.

A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless there is no one else who can.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The one receiving the *Aliya* begins reciting these verses with the congregation but concludes with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

🕊️ MINCHA

Mincha is longer than usual (due to *Krias Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); care should be taken to conclude before sunset (5:26pm).

Ideally, *Krias Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:56pm). *Shmoneh Esrei* may not begin before then.

After *Haftorah*, the *Chazzan* begins *Kaddish* when the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Kodesh*, similar to *Mincha* on *Shabbos*.

If an individual forgot to recite *Aneinu* in the *Brocho* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, he may recite it in the passage *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If one didn't remember until he concluded *Shmoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat it. [A non-fasting individual does not recite *Aneinu*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between *Goel Yisroel* and *R'faeinu*, and also recites *Birchas Kohanim* toward the end of *Shmoneh Esrei*.

The *Rebbe* reintroduced the custom of addressing the congregation after *Mincha* to arouse them with feelings of *Teshuvah*.

The fast concludes at 5:56pm.