

WEDNESDAY, 9 TAMMUZ

At the time of the *churban* of the first *Beis Hamikdash*, this was the day that the wall of Yerushalayim was breached. However, since in the days of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the breach occurred on the 17th of the month, and its lasting impact was many times more devastating, we commemorate the latter date—our Chachamim establishing that fasting on both these days would be too arduous for most people.

FRIDAY, 11 TAMMUZ, EREV SHABBOS

It is the tradition of a select few to fast on this day, the Friday of Parshas Chukas, as it is the anniversary of the calamity that befell European Jewry in the 13th century with the burning of twenty wagonfuls of holy *sefarim*. In the aftermath, it became known to the *Rabbonim*⁵ that this occurred in connection with the opening words of the *parshah*, *Zos chukas hatorah* (“this is the decree of the Torah”, which can also be read as “**concerning** the Torah”). This date is therefore commemorated on the day of the week it occurred, as opposed to a set calendar date.

Another tragedy connected with this fast that occurred on this day in the first year of *Gezeiras Tach V'tat* (1648-89), as recorded in the *Selichos* composed by Rabbi Shabse Cohen (the *Shach*, of the famous eponymous commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch*), was the destruction of two entire Jewish communities in pogroms initiated by the Cossacks.

SHNAYIM MIKRA

Although we hear the Torah being read in shul each Shabbos, an individual is nevertheless obligated to read each week's *parshah* for himself on a weekly basis, in the format of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*—reading each *possuk* twice and then its Aramaic translation in *Targum Onkelos* once. It is best practice to complete this reading on *erev Shabbos* after *chatzos* (halachic midday); to fulfill this obligation, however, it is still good to read it anytime during Shabbos morning before eating the day meal, though it is better if completed before Shacharis. Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshios Chukas and Balak*. It is our minhag with regard to all double *parshios* to include both *Haftoros* in this recitation.

Candle lighting is at **8:12 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

⁵ The process in which this information became known to them is a *shaalas chalom*, a practice in which holy people write a query before going to sleep and the Heavenly answer “comes” to them in a dreamstate.

SHABBOS PARSHAS CHUKAS-BALAK, 12 TAMMUZ

Chag Hageulah

Today we celebrate the birthday of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak in 5640 (1880). Also, on this day in 5687 (1927), he received the good tidings that he was freed from the exile imposed upon him after his arrest and imprisonment for his efforts in strengthening Torah and Judaism.

BLESSING, FARBRENGING, LEARNING

In 5748 (1988), the Rebbe announced: "The twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz need to be in tune with the principle of 'we open with blessing', so '*Gut Yom Tov!*' It is a mitzvah to wish a good Yom Tov to every Jewish person, even to a one who 'merely bears the title 'Jew'⁶—to him and to his family!"

"During the forthcoming two days of liberation," the Frierdiker Rebbe states in a letter, "which are the twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz, Chassidim are to *farbrenge* for material and spiritual good and blessing in the spirit of the custom instituted by our first father, the Alter Rebbe (to *farbenge* on special occasions). During this *farbrenge* Chassidim should talk to one another in a spirit of brotherhood about strengthening fixed times for Torah study. I send them my blessing that G-d favor them in body and spirit."

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe directed us to learn the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamar* entitled *Asarah Sheyoshvim Ve'oskim Batorah*□"Ten who sit and engage in Torah". Its publication for the first celebration of the twelfth of Tammuz constituted an everlasting instruction to study it on each subsequent *Chag Hageulah*; men, women and children should study it.

It is clear from the content of the Previous Rebbe's discourse and letter that his desire is for the discourse to be studied publicly—in a manner of "**Ten** who sit ..." When lacking an alternative, the discourse should be studied even if there are less than ten at the session—and even by an individual. It is clear, however, that all effort should initially be extended to facilitate the study with a session of (at least) ten people.⁷

FIRST PRINTING

On the 12th of Tammuz, 5676 (1816), the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch was set for print for the very first time.

TEFILLOS

In the last stanza of *Lecha Dodi*, the words *gam berinah* are replaced by gam

⁶ This phrase refers to an identical description in a famous letter the Frierdiker Rebbe disseminated in honor of his release concerning who is a potential celebrant on this occasion.

⁷ See *Sichas Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz* 5748, *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 13. Also, *Shabbos Parshas Chukas* 5750, *Hisvaaduyos*, p. 409. This *maamar* was reprinted and personally distributed by the Rebbe in honor of 12 Tammuz, 5750.

besimchah, as on every Yom Tov.

We do not say *Av Harachamim* or *Tzidkoscha*.

Pirkei Avos: In the tradition of extending the recital of the *perek* every Shabbos throughout the summer months, this week the fifth chapter of Avos is recited.⁸

Shabbos ends at **9:21pm**.

SUNDAY, 13 TAMMUZ

Chag Haegulah

On this day in 5687 (1927) the Frierdiker Rebbe was actually released to return home.

We do not say *Tachanun* today.

From a letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe to mark the festival of his liberation: “I send you a *maamar* ...which is my participation—for their success—with my beloved friends the Chassidim wherever they reside, (which is my way of) being united with you in your *farbrengen* for the purpose of strengthening the practices of Chassidus, in fixing and observing periods for studying Chassidus and to be inspired to pragmatically implement those studies...

“May our G-d and G-d of our Fathers bless the whole community of Chassidim—them, their households, their children and grandchildren among all our brothers the people of Israel (G-d grant them eternal life) with all good things from the soul to those of the flesh.”

TUESDAY, 15 TAMMUZ

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s imprisonment began at 2:45 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 Sivan, 5687 (June 15, 1927) for his “crimes” of spreading Torah Judaism under the Communist regime. On 3 Tammuz, the first breakthrough occurred, when his death sentence was commuted to three years of exile. On 12 Tammuz, in exile in the town of Kostroma, he was informed that he would be released to return home. He remained until one half-hour past mid-day, Wednesday, 13 Tammuz. Two days later, on 15 Tammuz, he arrived back home in Leningrad, the last leg in his journey to redemption.

TODAY’S SPECIALTY

“Today (15 Tammuz),” the Rebbe says,⁹ “is connected with the joyfulness of the (Frierdiker) Rebbe’s release (upon arriving home after his final arrest)—and its power shows itself in the full moon of this ‘month of geulah’. This day has the

8) The Shavuot Day-to-Day Guide of Badatz discusses avoiding the mention of Hashem’s name in the incomplete Torah verses mentioned in *Pirkei Avos*. This week, it applies in Mishnah 18. We read, “*Tzidkas Hashem...*”

9) *Roshei Devarim of Sichas Tes-Vov Tammuz*, 5736

greatest ability, from any other day this month, to affect the “fullness” and perfection of all the rest of its days, that they too should be transformed to “days of happiness and joy”.

Today also commemorates the *yahrtzeit* of the *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh*.¹⁰

WEDNESDAY, 16 TAMMUZ

ANTIDOTAL JOY

“Today,” the Rebbe said in 5745,¹¹ “before the Three Weeks begin, we need to preempt the negative aspects related to this time period with the appropriate antidote. This demands that in the upcoming days—all twenty-one of them—special efforts should be made to increase Torah learning and giving *tzedakah* (the latter on weekdays, of course). Since the achievement of every spiritual act (in learning and mitzvah performance) is improved when it involves ten Jews or more, we should try, in every way possible, that these resolutions should be of a communal nature—learning in groups of ten or more, giving *tzedakah* in collaboration, and also throughout these days putting greater effort in strengthening the aspect of *tefillah* (especially with a *minyan*). And in all these three mainstays should carry an infusion of *simchah* (even *tefillah*, together with the aspect of introspection needed as a preparation for davening), for ‘you should serve Hashem with joy.’”

THE THREE WEEKS

Bein Hameitzarim

Bein Hameitzarim, which means “between the straits”, is the time between the 17th of Tammuz, when the calamities associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* began, and the 9th of Av, when the *churban* culminated. It is a period of mourning for the Jewish people, one that should affect each of us personally and painfully even today, 1955 years later, as the adage admonishes, “Any generation that doesn’t effectuate the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is considered as if it was destroyed in their time.”¹²

KER A VELT TODAY!

On the subject of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe says¹³: According to the Rogachover, the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **continuous**. This doesn’t simply mean that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed about two thousand years ago and from then on we are righteously mourning, and when it comes to *Tishah B’Av* and the Three

¹⁰) The *Ohr Hachayim*’s relationship with the *Baal Shem Tov* (and their connection to *Moshiach*) is discussed in various sources. See Hebrew section for these, and also for references for the addition of “*Hakadosh*” to his title.

¹¹) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, pp. 280 ff

¹²) Talmud Yerushalmi □ Yuma 1,1

¹³) From a *sichah* of 12 Tammuz, 5744