



# בס"ד Laws & Customs: Tishah B'Av

For the year 5784

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## TRAGEDIES

Five tragedies occurred on this day:

- The decree for the sin of the *Meraglim*.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed.
- The fall of *Beitar*.
- The site of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the surrounding area was ploughed.

## EREV TISHAH B'AV

A *Bris* or *Pidyon Haben*, including the *Seudah*, should be conducted before midday.

One should not engage in enjoyable or leisurely activity.

Starting from midday (12:25pm), one learns only those parts of *Torah* which may be studied on *Tishah B'Av* (see section "Learning on Tishah B'Av"). Both *Chitas* and *Rambam* should be completed before midday. [If one is running late, *Chitas* may be finished any time before sunset, whereas *Rambam* should be postponed until after *Tishah B'Av*.]

A *Siyum* is made as per the rest of the Nine Days. If after midday, it should be performed on a topic which may be learned on *Tishah B'Av* (such as the conclusion of *Moied Kotton*).

One should eat and drink sufficiently well in preparation for the fast, but not in a festive manner, nor in excessive amounts. This meal (along with *Bentching*) should occur before *Mincha*.

## MINCHA / SEUDAH HAMAFASEKES

*Mincha* is *davened* earlier, to leave sufficient time for the *Seudah Hamafsekes*. [A *Chiyuv* recites the usual *Mishnayos* prior to the last *Kaddish*.]

*Tachanun* is omitted from *Mincha* onward until after *Tishah B'Av*.

The *Seudah Hamafsekes* consists of bread dipped in ashes and cold hard-

boiled eggs. One may drink water, tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic beverages, but should consume less than he usually would.

The *Seudah Hamafsekes* is eaten when sitting on a low chair. One may still wear leather shoes.

*Shir Hamaalos* is recited before *Bentching*, but a *Mezuman* is not made. Ideally, three adult men should avoid eating this meal together in the first place.

Before *bentching*, one should verbally stipulate that he might still eat or drink again before the fast begins. [If one neglected to do so, it is still permissible to eat and drink.]

After *bentching*, one may resume sitting on a regular chair until *Tishah B'Av* begins.

After *Plag Hamincha*, if one accepted (whether verbally or in thought) to begin the fast, one may no longer eat, and all the prohibitions of *Tishah B'Av* apply. Even so, leather shoes may still be worn.

## TISHAH B'AV EVENING

*Tishah B'Av* begins at 5:42pm.

The *Paroches* is removed from the *Aron HaKodesh* (or moved to the side).

The lights in *Shule* are dimmed to a bare minimum. Nonetheless, the *Chazzan* lights the usual number of candles; five for a *Chiyuv*, and two for a non-*Chiyuv*.

After *Shmoneh Esrei*, the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Tiskabel*.

*Eicha* is recited along with the *Chazzan*. One should not recite it standing, but rather should sit on a low chair. The *Chazzan* recites it unhurriedly, pausing between each *Posuk* and raising his voice slightly at the beginning of each *Perek*.

The last *Possuk* (i.e. the second "*Hashivenu*") is recited aloud with the *Chazzan*, followed by a few short *Kinos*.

One who *davens* without a *Minyan* still recites *Eicha* and *Kinos*.

*V'Atah Kadosh* is recited, followed by the full *Kaddish* – excluding the line beginning *Tiskabel* – and *Aleinu*.

A *Chiyuv* recites the third *Perek* of *Mishnayos Moied Kotton* prior to the last *Kaddish*.

It is not our custom to sleep on the floor or to place a stone under the pillow.

## LEARNING ON TISHAH B'AV

On *Tishah B'Av*, one may learn only those parts of *Torah* which discuss the laws of mourning, the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, or the tragedies which befell the Jewish people throughout history. One should learn these in a cursory manner, and not delve into it (*Drush v'Pilpul*). Similarly, one should not consult a *Rav* regarding *Halachic* matters irrelevant to *Tishah B'Av*.

The Rebbe Rashab would learn the *Sugya* of the *Churban* in *Masechta Gittin* (55b-58a), as well as *Midrash Eicha Rabba*. [Some other appropriate things to learn: The books of *Eicha* and *Iyov*, the dire prophecies of *Yirmiyahu*, the third *Perek* of *Moied Kotton*, the end of *Masechta Taanis* in *Yerushalmi*, the *Tzemach Tzedek's Reshimos* on *Eicha*, and a review of the *Halachos* of the day.]

As during the rest of the Nine Days, one should endeavour to hear a *Siyum*. This should be done on a topic which may be learned on *Tishah B'Av* (such as the conclusion of *Moied Kotton*).

Needless to say, the obligation to learn *Torah* at every opportunity applies fully on *Tishah B'Av*. [Many *Achronim* bemoaned the lax attitude some people sadly adopt towards learning on *Tishah B'Av*.]

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *Mincha*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals – especially if one is exempt from fasting.

## LAWS OF TISHAH B'AV

On *Tishah B'Av*, it is prohibited to:

- Wear festive clothing or festive jewellery.
- Wear footwear containing any leather. One may wear non-leather footwear, including crocs. [If absolutely necessary for work purposes, a *Rav* should be consulted.]
- Go to *Mikvah*, bathe or wash any part of the body – even in cold water. Similarly, one may not wipe himself with a cloth that is damp enough to moisten what it touches. [One may rinse if necessary for medical or therapeutic purposes, or for pain-relief. One may also rinse any soiled areas, but only as necessary. Similarly, one may wash his hands up to the knuckles after exiting the restroom or touching an area of the body that is normally covered. One may also rinse one's hands as usual before and during food preparation. All the above may be done with soap when applicable. One may also wash dishes, but it is best to do so whilst wearing gloves.]
- Apply makeup, ointment, lotions, perfumes or creams – unless necessary for medical or therapeutic purposes, or for pain-relief.
- Brush one's teeth or rinse one's mouth.
- Sit on a normal-height chair until *Tishah B'Av* midday (12:25pm) – unless one is frail or infirm, pregnant, while nursing, or when sitting in a vehicle.
- Intimacy – *Harchakos* must be kept even during the day.
- Greet another. If one was greeted, he may return the greeting in a subdued manner, or explain that it is *Tishah B'Av*.
- Give gifts (unless it is *Tzedakah*).
- Study, go to work, engage in business activity, or perform a job or task that requires concentration and will distract one from mourning. [Technically, these are permitted after midday, but it is best to refrain even then.] Nevertheless, one may

do these in order to prevent a financial loss or to retain his job. Even then, one should defer any publicly performed work until after midday, if this is possible.

- Instruct a non-Jew to work publicly on his behalf (such as construction). However, one may instruct a non-Jew to do any other work, even if it will be performed in one's own home.

One should not idle away one's time, go on trips, read novels or articles, or partake in any leisurely or entertaining pastimes and activities.

One should not smoke. [At the very least, one should do so in private only, and keep it to a minimum. Of course, smoking is discouraged in general.]

One should be especially careful not to become angered.

## WHO MUST FAST?

The ill, elderly, mothers who gave birth within the past month, or pregnant and nursing women who feel or anticipate excessive difficulty should consult a *Rav*.

A *Rav* should be consulted regarding medicines.

One who inadvertently ate during the fast must immediately resume fasting.

One may not taste food to determine whether it requires salt/spices, even for a *Seudas Mitzvah*.

Anyone below *Bar/Bas Mitzvah* need not fast. From age nine upwards, the custom is to train children to fast at night, and for several hours during the day, as per the child's abilities. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.]

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid delicacies or excessive intake. Similarly, children old enough to understand the concept of a fast day should avoid delicacies. [Bread is best avoided, so as to sidestep a number of disputes regarding how to wash and *Bentch*.]

## TISHAH B'AV MORNING

*Neggel Vasser* is washed only up to the knuckles. [Tip: Prepare the *Neggel Vasser* in a slightly different way as a

reminder not to wash one's hands as usual.]

One wipes his eyes with the towel moistened by the hands. One who washes the flakes out of his eyes every morning may do so on *Tishah B'Av* too.

After getting dressed, *Neggel Vasser* is performed again – with a *Brocho* – only up to the knuckles.

The *Brocho* of *Sheoso Li Kol Tzorki* is omitted until the following morning.

*Tallis* and *Tefillin* are not worn until after midday. Similarly, a *Brocho* is not recited on the *Tallis Kotton*. The *Tzitzis* are not held or kissed during *Boruch Sheomar* and *Sh'ma*.

The *Chazzan* lights candles as usual; five for a *Chiyuv*, and two for a non-*Chiyuv*.

During *Shacharis*, only the *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu*. A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as *Chazan*. [See [17 Tammuz Guide](#) regarding a *Chazzan* who forgot to recite *Aneinu*, or who is not fasting.]

The *Chazzan* does not recite *Birchas Kohanim*.

*Tachnun*, *Selichos* and *Avinu Malkein* are not recited.

An individual who won't be fasting must still hear *Krias Hatorah*, but is not called up for an *Aliya*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up at *Shacharis*, he may accept the *Aliya*. He should not serve as the *Chazzan* or the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless no one else can. In any case, he may perform *Hagbah* or *Gelilah*.

*Kaddish* is recited between the last *Aliyah* and *Haftorah*. During *Gelilah* and *Haftorah*, the *Magbiha* holds the *Sefer Torah* while sitting on a regular-height chair. The *Sefer Torah* is returned to the *Aron HaKodesh* right after the *Haftorah*.

Afterwards, *Kinos* is recited. One should not recite it standing, but should rather sit on a low chair.

One should refrain from casual conversation or other unnecessary interruptions during the recital of *Kinos*.

After *Kinos*, the following are recited: *Ashrei*, *Uva L'tziyon* (omitting the *Possuk* beginning *Va'ani Zos Brisi*), and *Aleinu*. Everything else (including *Tehillim*) is postponed until *Mincha* time.

After *Uva L'tziyon*, the *Chazzan* omits the line beginning *Tiskabel* from *Kaddish*.

A *Chiyuv* recites the third *Perek* of *Mishnayos Moied Kotton* prior to the last *Kaddish*.

One should recite the book of *Eicha* after *Kinos* and the conclusion of *davening*.

Where possible, one should time his morning with the aim of concluding *Kinos* (and *Eicha*) shortly before midday, as opposed to long beforehand.

A *Bris* should be postponed until after *Kinos*. The baby's parents and *Baalei Habris* may wear *Shabbos* clothing for the duration of the *Bris*, but not leather shoes. The *Sandek* sits on a regular-height chair while the *Bris* is performed. The *Brocho* is recited on wine, but is drunk by a child who understands the concept of *Brochos* (the younger, the better). The *Seudah* takes place at night, after the fast, and all attending the *Seudah* may partake of meat and wine.

It is not our custom to specifically visit a cemetery on *Tishah B'Av*.

## 🌀 TISHAH B'AV AFTERNOON

In the afternoon, the intensity of mourning lessens and some restrictions are relaxed.

It is customary to wait until midday before preparing for the post-fast meal. However, one may begin preparations for a *Seudas Mitzvah* before midday.

After midday, it is permitted to sit on chairs of regular height, unless one will still be finishing *Kinos*.

*Chitas* is learned after midday, but *Rambam* is postponed until evening.

## 🌀 MINCHA

After midday (and before *Mincha*), the *Paroches* is restored to its usual place on the *Aron HaKodesh*.

*Mincha* is longer than usual (due to *Krias Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); it should be timed to conclude before sunset (5:43pm).

Before *Mincha*, one dons *Tallis* and *Tefillin* and recites the entire *Sh'ma*. This is followed by the selections omitted from the conclusion of

*Shacharis*. [I.e. *Shir Shel Yom*, *Ein Kelokeinu*, *Tehillim*.] These should be recited with a *Minyan*, and *Kaddish* is said at the appropriate places.

*Krias Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:52pm). *Shmoneh Esrei* must certainly not begin before then.

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

An individual who won't be fasting must still hear *Krias Hatorah* of *Vayechal*, but is not called up for an *Aliya*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and declining the *Aliya* will pain him or minimize the honour of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliya*. He should not serve as the *Chazzan* or the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless no one else can. In any case, he may perform *Hagbah* or *Gelilah*.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The *Oileh* starts reciting these verses with the congregation but finishes with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

After *Haftorah*, the *Chazzan* slowly recites *Kaddish* while the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*, similar to *Mincha* on *Shabbos*.

One who forgot *Nacheim* may recite it in *Sh'ma Koleinu* after *Aneinu*; in *Retzei* before *V'sechezena*; or in *Modim* before *V'al Kulam*. [In any of these cases, he recites the conclusion of the respective *Brocho* as usual, and does not add the words *Menachem Tziyon Uvoneh Yerushalayim*.] If one didn't remember until he concluded *Shmoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat it.

One who forgot to include *Aneinu* in *Sh'ma Koleinu* may recite it in the passage of *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If he didn't remember until he ended *Shmoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat it.

One who is not fasting omits *Aneinu* but still recites *Nacheim*.

The *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between *Goel Yisroel* and *R'faeinu*, *Nacheim* in *Boinei Yerushalayim*, and also recites *Birchas Kohanim* toward the end of *Shmoneh Esrei*. [See [17 Tammuz Guide](#)

regarding a *Chazzan* who forgot to recite *Aneinu*, or who is not fasting.]

*Tachnun* and *Avinu Malkeinu* are not said.

A *Chiyuv* recites the standard *Mishnayos* prior to the last *Kaddish*.

*Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin* is put on after *Mincha*, and one recites the usual selections.

One should make sure to put on *Tefillin* before sunset (5:43pm). If one *davens* with a *Minyan* which will conclude only after sunset, he should change into *Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin* before *Mincha*.

## 🌀 CONCLUSION OF FAST

The fast concludes at 6:11pm.

One washes *Netilas Yadayim* (covering the entire hand with water) without a *Brocho*, and rinses one's mouth as soon as possible after *Maariv*, and certainly before *Kiddush Levanah* or breaking the fast.

*Kiddush Levanah* is recited if the moon is visible. Ideally, one should first change into leather shoes, rinse one's face to freshen up, and taste something, unless this will negate his participation in a *Minyan*.

The *Beis Hamikdash* was set ablaze on the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, and burned through the 10<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, the custom is to extend all restrictions of the [Nine Days](#) (including – but not limited to – consuming meat or wine, having a haircut, bathing, wearing freshly laundered clothing, or doing the laundry) until midday (12:25pm) of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av.

## 🌀 15<sup>TH</sup> AV (MONDAY)

*Tachnun* is not recited on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av, nor during the *Mincha* beforehand.

It is forbidden to fast on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av, even a *Chosson* and *Kallah*.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of Av is an opportune time for a joyous *Farbrengen* and *Hachlatos* to increase *Torah* study.

One should continue to participate in a *Siyum* and learn *Hilchos Beis Habechira* every day until (and including) the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av.