



בס"ד Laws & Customs: Nine Days

For the year 5786

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☞ THE MONTH OF AV

משנכנס אב ממעטים בשמחה – “When the month of Av enters, we reduce our joy.” The entire month of Av is considered inopportune. One who is scheduled for a court hearing or similar matter should try to postpone it until after the month of Av, or at least until after the Nine Days.

☞ THE NINE DAYS

In addition to the prohibitions of the Three Weeks, further restrictions apply during the Nine Days, beginning on Tuesday evening at sunset (5:19pm):

One may not take a haircut. [Even so, a woman may groom or wax eyebrows and legs etc. Similarly, a man may trim his moustache if it interferes with eating, but only until the actual week of *Tishah B'Av*.]

An *Opshernish* should be postponed until after the Nine Days. [Other practices associated with an *Opshernish* – such as training the child to wear *Tzitzis* and recite *Brochos*, *Shema* and *Bentching* – should **not** be delayed.]

Weddings should not be celebrated during the Nine Days.

One may not eat new fruit, unless for health purposes.

One may not listen to live music. Listening to recorded music for enjoyment or festive purposes should also be avoided.

One should not build, remodel, renovate or paint one's home. [One may be lenient if repairs are urgent or constitute an emergency; when waiting carries a risk of significant financial loss; when a non-Jewish contractor who was engaged before the Nine Days insists on working during the Nine Days and even turns down a small bonus to delay the job; when necessary for a *Mitzvah*, such as a *Shule*, or for a couple's first marriage soon after the Nine Days.]

Moving into a new home should be deferred until the month of *Elul*, or at least until after the 15th of Av. However,

one may sign a contract to purchase or lease property.

Planting trees or flowers for shade or fragrance is not permitted, though one may tend to these if already planted before the Nine Days. Planting for the sake of producing fruit is permitted.

One should not arrange or attend a feast or party (such as a farewell party) – even for a *Mitzvah* that does not have a fixed time. Therefore, a *Siyum Sefer Torah* or *Chanukas Habayis* should be postponed until after the Nine Days.

One may arrange a gathering with light refreshments, especially if the gathering is associated with a *Mitzvah*.

One may become engaged during the Nine Days and even on *Tishah B'Av*, but a festive meal should not be held until after the Nine Days. One may mark the occasion with light refreshments, but without singing and dancing.

Kiddush Levana is postponed until *Motzei Tishah B'Av*.

When possible, non-urgent medical procedures should be avoided, especially during the week of *Tishah B'Av*.

It is customary to avoid perilous activities during the Nine Days.

Similarly, it is customary to refrain from travel during the Nine Days. If travel is unavoidable, one should at least begin preparations (such as starting to pack) beforehand.

☞ SWIMMING & BATHING

One may not shower or bathe the entire body, even in cold water. However, one may wash the face, hands and feet in cold water. Similarly, any soiled areas may be rinsed.

One should not go swimming.

One may bathe as usual for health or *Mitzvah* (e.g. *Mikvah*) purposes.

There is room for leniency if one suffers from perspiration or the like, and is not bathing for pleasure. [Where possible, this should be done with cooler water

than usual, and only for as long as absolutely necessary, to minimize any unintended enjoyment.]

One may not use a spa or sauna.

One may cut nails. [Even those who are stringent will permit this for the honour of *Shabbos* or for the sake of a *Mitzvah*.]

☞ NEW CLOTHING & ALTERATIONS

One should not purchase new clothing or shoes during the Nine Days – even if they will not be worn until after the Nine Days. [This applies even to children's clothing and shoes.]

One may be lenient if the item is substantially discounted, and it might not be available later at a similar price.

One may not wear new clothing during the Nine Days, even if it was purchased beforehand. Nevertheless, one who forgot to buy footwear for *Tishah B'Av* may do so during the Nine Days.

One may not commission a tailor or seamstress to make new clothing – even if it will not be worn until after the Nine Days. [One may be lenient if it is needed for one's own wedding and there is not enough time after the Nine Days.]

One should not knit or embroider a new garment.

One may not make alterations to new clothing or shoes, but may make minor alterations to used clothing or shoes.

A tailor or seamstress by profession should consult a *Rov* regarding what may and may not be done.

☞ LAUNDRY

It is forbidden to launder or iron garments, undergarments, tablecloths, linens or towels – even if they won't be used until after the Nine Days. [Spot-cleaning a stain should also be avoided where possible.] However, using a dryer and folding clothes is permissible.

One may not give these items to a non-Jewish launderer or dry cleaner during the Nine Days. [However, one may send these in before the Nine Days, even if

they will be laundered during the Nine Days. Similarly, one may send these in during the Nine Days if he will otherwise not have clean clothing for *Shabbos*.]

One may launder the clothing of young children – who soil their clothing constantly – as necessary. Similarly, a married woman may launder and use *Levanim* as needed. [When washing by hand, it is preferable to launder only a few items at a time. However, when using a machine, it is best to minimize the number of loads by combining as many permissible items together as possible. Even so, one may only include items which are permissible to wash.]

A professional launderer should consult a *Rov* regarding what may be done.

WEARING FRESH CLOTHING

It is forbidden to wear freshly laundered clothing or use freshly laundered tablecloths, linens or towels – even if laundered before the Nine Days. Accordingly, before the Nine Days begin, one should wear or use (even for a short time) all the items that are needed during the Nine Days.

If one neglected to do so, there is room to permit use of these items after leaving them on the ground for a while.

The above does not apply to undergarments and socks; the accepted practice is to change them as necessary, even if they are freshly laundered.

One may provide a guest with fresh linens and towels. However, it is fitting for the guest to leave them on the ground for a while before use.

One should not wear *Shabbos* clothing during the weekdays of the Nine Days, even if not freshly laundered. However, on the occasion of a *Bris*, freshly laundered *Shabbos* clothes are worn by the *Mohel* and *Sandek*, the parents of the newborn, and the woman who serves as the *kvatterin*. Similarly, in the event of a *Pidyon Haben*, the baby's parents and the *Kohen* wear freshly laundered *Shabbos* clothing. Likewise, a *Bar-Mitzvah* boy and his parents may wear *Shabbos* clothing.

MEAT & WINE

Meat and wine are associated with joy. Additionally, the *Avodah* in the *Beis Hamikdash* – which was interrupted in

the Nine Days – primarily involved meat and wine. Therefore, one may not eat poultry and meat, nor drink grape-juice and wine, unless for health purposes.

One should not partake even of a dish merely flavoured with meat or gravy, grape-juice or wine. [However, one may consume wine vinegar.]

One may eat *Parve* food that was cooked in a clean *Fleishig* pot or utensil.

Other alcoholic beverages are permitted, but one should remain mindful of the “spirit of the law”.

When performing a *Mezuman*, one should not use a *Kos*, even if he is ordinarily accustomed to.

It is Chabad practice not to eat meat and wine even when celebrating a *Siyum*.

LEARNING & SIYUMIM

During these days, it is appropriate for both men and women to increase their *Torah* study, with a special focus on the *Halachos* of the Nine Days, as well as topics of the *Geulah* and the *Beis Hamikdash* (e.g. chapters 40-48 of *Yechezkel*, tractates *Middos* and *Tomid*, *Hilchos Beis Habechira* in the *Rambam*).

It is also appropriate to increase in *Tzedakah* and *Ahavas Yisroel*. These activities should especially be performed in association with *Siyumim*.

As we draw close to the days of *Moshiach*, our focus shifts to the inner purpose of the destruction, which is to bring us to an even higher level – the third *Beis Hamikdash*. In this spirit, we moderate the sadness with permissible expressions of joy. Therefore, one should participate in a *Siyum* every day of the Nine Days, including *Shabbos*, and if possible, until the 15th of Av.

The *Siyum* should preferably be on a *Masechta* of *Gemoro* (rather than *Mishnayos*). The *Siyum* may be made even by a child.

One recites the normal *Kaddish D'rabannan* at the conclusion of the *Siyum*, and not the “*Kaddish Hagadol*” printed in the back of the *Gemoro*.

Ideally, the *Siyum* should be on a *Masechta* with a conclusion that all participants can easily understand. The one making the *Siyum* should present it in a clear and accessible manner.

The *Siyumim* should involve as many participants as possible. On several

occasions, the Rebbe encouraged women, and even very young children, to participate in a *Siyum*.

If it is not possible to participate in person, one should at least strive to participate via telephone or other communication methods.

If possible, the *Siyum* should include food (and even a *Farbrengen*), but not meat or wine.

SHABBOS CHAZON

On Friday, one bathes as usual in honour of *Shabbos*, goes to *Mikvah*, trims nails, and uses freshly laundered *Shabbos* clothing and tablecloths (that were laundered before the Nine Days). However, one should not change the linens.

If necessary, one may taste the *Fleishig* food when preparing it for *Shabbos*, provided that it is expelled without swallowing. Apart from that, one may not partake of any *Fleishig Shabbos* foods on *Erev Shabbos*, even if one is normally accustomed to doing so.

Shabbos clothing is worn as usual and care is taken not to display any signs of mourning on *Shabbos*. In fact, one should be even more joyous than usual.

One may – and should – eat meat and drink wine on *Shabbos Chazon*.

It is a *Mitzvah* to publicize, in the name of R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, that this *Shabbos* is called “*Chazon*” (vision) because the *Neshomo* is shown a vision of the *Beis Hamikdash*. The purpose of this vision is to arouse a yearning to actually see the *Beis Hamikdash*, and to do all that is necessary to attain this goal.

In *Krias Hatorah*, the first *Aliyah* ends at the end of *Possuk* 11, and the second *Aliyah* begins with the word *Eicha*.

Havdallah is recited on wine. In the first instance, the wine should be drunk by a child who understands the concept of *Brochos* (the younger, the better). If that is not an option, the wine is drunk by the one who recited *Havdallah*.

Shabbos clothing is worn on *Motzei Shabbos*, as usual.

5TH OF AV

This day is the *yohrtzeit* of the *Arizal*. One should mark the day by increasing one's efforts in spreading the inner dimension of *Torah*.