

**Please Note, this newsletter has holy writings and should be disposed of in Geniza only.**

The three weeks from the 17th Tammuz until Tisha B'Ab is a period of mourning for the Jewish people. On these dates our people suffered their greatest tragedies and punishments. It was on the 17th of Tammuz when Moshe Rabenu descended from Mount Sinai with the **Luchoth Ha Berit** containing the Ten Commandments to find the B'nei Yisrael rejoicing with the idol of the golden calf. He immediately shattered the **Luchoth** written by the hand of G-d and punished the offenders. But the day was set for other tragedies which would follow: The walls of Jerusalem were breached on that day at the time of the 2nd destruction, the daily offering of the **Tamid** was discontinued at the time of the Greek Siege, and Apostomous, the Roman ruler publicly burnt the **Sefer Torah** and placed an idol in the Temple.

On Tisha B'Ab the **Meraglim** (spies that Moshe Rabenu sent to spy out the land) returned and gave their bad report about the land which turned the hearts of our people and their faith in G-d's promise to take them into the Holy Land. They rebelled and cried in desperation without cause. Thus the day was fixed by G-d as a day of lamentation and retribution for future generations. A day when it would seem that the protecting hand of G-d was removed from his children. On this date both the first and second temples were destroyed, our great cities in Israel were levelled and our people were butchered and exiled. Even in later generations tragedies fell on this day. The exile from Spain and the end of the golden era took place on this day as did many of the pogroms and persecutions in Europe.

We fast and mourn on Tisha B'Ab for what has been lost not in desperation, but in hope for we now know that if we repent and correct the causes that have brought on these calamities worked by G-d the Almighty, His promises will be fulfilled and He will return the **Shechina** to Zion and the temple will be rebuilt. We have seen the fulfilment of the destruction exactly as prophesied in the Torah and **Neveim**, now we can look forward to the prophecy of the redemption and salvation as Rabbi Akiva pointed out to his companions in the Talmud **Macott** when they cried at the sight of the Temple Mount in desolation. He laughed, then explained why he did so; for until he had seen the prophecy of Uria that Zion would become a ploughed field because of our deeds, he could not be sure of the prophecy of Zacharia; that Jerusalem would be filled with people living a full long life and the in gathering of our people from the corners of the earth. But now that the first and terrible part had come true, he could look forward to the redemption and promise. It is on the afternoon of Tisha B'Ab that we say the verses of **Nahamu Nahamu**, consolation for in the destruction we see the seeds of redemption for those who mourn for Jerusalem will see and take part in its happiness which will be very soon.

**AMEN**

**Rabbi A. David**

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### **SOME LAWS AND CUSTOMS FOR THE 3 WEEKS LEADING UP TO TISHA B'AB**

Our physical enjoyment is progressively curtailed during the 3 weeks leading up to Tisha B'Ab to remind us of the tragedies that occurred during this time. This is done in four stages:

#### **Stage 1 - begins on the 17th of Tamuz - Sunday 27th June 2021**

- 1.1 The fast of Tamuz is an obligation and only pregnant and nursing woman and people who are ill are exempt.  
It is customary not to have weddings from the 17th of Tammuz until after Tisha B'Ab although engagements are permitted. But in Baghdad it was customary to refrain from doing so from Rosh Hodesh Ab. However, if necessary, an engagement can be made without a party and only light refreshments.
- 1.2 Parties and playing of music is forbidden during the three weeks and even on the night before a **Brit Mila (Aghdil Yas)** the playing of music should be avoided. But Shirim and Tishbahoht can be sung.
- 1.3 During the three weeks commencing on the 17th Tammuz, until after the 10th of Ab we should refrain from making Berchat Shehechyanu on new clothes or new fruit. But a pregnant woman who desires a new fruit, or a sick person who needs to eat, should make the beracha. According to our Minhag, the Beracha can also be made for a Mitzvah such as **Pideon Haben or Brit Mila**.

## **Stage 2 - begins on Rosh Hodesh Ab - Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

- 2.1 According to our Minhag, it is forbidden to buy, sew or wear new clothes from Rosh Hodesh Ab but where one would have to pay more later, it is considered saving a loss therefore it is permitted to buy but not to wear them. Repairs etc. on clothes are allowed.
- 2.2 From Rosh Hodesh until after Tisha B'Ab, one should avoid any court case or legal battle with a non-Jew. It is not a good time for us. During the three weeks we should be careful not to strike a child or pupil or do anything that might involve the slightest danger.
- 2.3 One must refrain from making preparations or shopping for a wedding from Rosh Hodesh Ab unless there is no time later or if the article is cheaper at the time.
- 2.4 Building or decorating for pleasure and beauty should not be done during the nine days but building for necessity started before can be completed. This prohibition does not apply to a Beth HaKeneset or Beth Hamedrash.
- 2.5 Our minhag is to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine from the 2nd day of Rosh Hodesh Ab until after the fast except during Shabbat and wine for havdala on Motzei Shabbat. Any meat foods left over from Shabbat may be eaten on Motzei Shabbat.
- 2.6 Our Minhag is not to have a bath during the nine days commencing on Rosh Hodesh Ab. However, those who usually go to the Mikva may do so even on Erev Shabbat (Chazon). It is also permitted to wash the face, hands and legs with hot water **Lichbod Shabbat**. A bath for medical reasons is permitted. There are some who refrain from a bath only on the week of Tisha B'Ab itself. This minhag is generally followed in hot climates and where people are particular to shower frequently. According to this opinion one could have a shower on erev Shabbat Chazon.

## **Stage 3 - The week of Tisha B'Ab (Shavuah She Chal Bo Tisha B'Ab - begins Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

- 3.1 It is forbidden to have a haircut or to shave on the week of Tisha B'Ab. This applies to children as well. The minhag of the Ari was to refrain for the three weeks. Some poskim do not allow a man to comb his hair when dry for fear of detaching hair.
- 3.2 It is forbidden to wash clothes or wear cleaned clothes during the week of Tisha B'Ab. So if we wish to change a shirt or underwear, they should be worn for an hour in the previous week and set aside to be worn later. We are permitted to change clothes for Shabbat. Nappies and babies clothes may be washed when necessary. The mohel, sandak and parents of the baby can wear Shabbat clothes at the brit mila.
- 3.3 Nails should not be cut on the week of Tisha B'ab but if it protrudes over the flesh, it is permitted.
- 3.4 **But since this year Tisha B'Ab is on Sunday, according to the Shulchan Aruch there is no laws of 'Shavuah Shechal Bo' and all the above would be permitted. Nevertheless as far as shaving and haircut are concerned a person should refrain so as to come into the Fast looking dissheveled (untidy).**

## **Stage 4 – Seuda Mafseket – Shabbat Kodesh 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

- 4.1 For the final meal before the fast we eat bread with 1 cooked dish, even a soft boiled egg and a hard boiled egg would be considered two different dishes, but a cooked meal with many ingredients cooked in the usual way is considered one dish. The minhag in Baghdad was to have rice cooked with lentils for Seuda Mafseket and it was considered one dish as it was usually cooked like that. Most people have a boiled egg with bread.
- 4.2 One is allowed to eat fruit and vegetables and not cooked dairy products with this meal but it is good to avoid them for reducing ones pleasure.
- 4.3 Any meal before this has no restriction.
- 4.4 We do not sit on a normal chair for eating the final meal, we sit on a rug or cushion. Three men do not sit together to eat this meal so as not to be obligated for Zimun.
- 4.5 If we finish the meal early we are allowed to drink or snack after the meal before sunset 9:09pm, if we had in mind not to accept the fast when completing the Sueda Mafseket. **This year since Erev Tisha B'Ab falls on Shabbat there are no restrictions and we can eat the Seuda Mafseket even with meat and wine as we would a normal Shabbat until the fast starts at 9:09pm.**

## Stage 5 – Fast of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ab – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

The fast starts Shabbat 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 9:09pm and finishes Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 10:03pm

- 5.1 Even pregnant women and nursing mothers are obliged to fast on Tisha B'Ab unlike the other three public fasts. But a woman who has given birth within 30 days need not fast unless she feels strong enough. If a person is ill and feels weak he does not need to fast all day on Tisha B'Ab but he should start the fast for some hours and then break it. He does not need to eat in small quantities like on Yom Kippur but he should not indulge in delicacies, wine and meat unless he has been instructed by a doctor to eat meat. All the other restrictions like bathing and washing and applying creams do apply if not for medical necessity.
- 5.2 On the eve of Tisha B'Ab after midday, 1:07pm, we may only study those portions of the Torah permitted to be studied on Tisha B'Ab i.e. subjects which have to do with the destruction and mourning. Some poskim are lenient since it falls on Shabbat this year.
- 5.3 It is forbidden to wear leather shoes or slippers on Tisha B'Ab.
- 5.4 One should not sit on a chair up to midday of the fast which is 1:07 pm. This applies at home and at the Beth Hamedrash. It does not apply to anyone suffering from a disability or illness. The custom some have of going shopping after midday is a mistake; even strolling and window-shopping is not allowed.
- 5.5 We do not wash our face or dip our hands in water during the fast and even the Netila of the morning is done only up to the joints of the fingers and not the whole hand. But a housewife who has to cook, can soak the food and wash them as usual. If necessary, we can wash off dirt from our hands. We do not put cosmetic creams or oils on our body during the fast.
- 5.6 Husband and wife should keep away from close physical contact during the fast.
- 5.7 We do not greet each other on Tisha B'Ab.
- 5.8 According to Ben Ish Hai, the Talit and Tefillin are put on at home and Shema and Kadesh Li are said before coming to the Beth HaKeneset for Shaharit. But many keep the Minhag Ha Mekubalim of Jerusalem and pray Shaharit in the synagogue with Talit and Tefillin which they remove before the Kinot. There are some who only wear Talit and Tefillin for Mincha as mentioned in Maran. Someone who has put on Tefillin at home in the morning could put them on again at Mincha if he so wishes.
- 5.9 An ill man who is permitted to break the fast should say **Nahamu** in the Berchat Hamazon after Z'man Mincha Gadolah. Someone who has to take tablets on Tisha B'Ab should consult the Rabbi.
- 5.10 It is meritorious to make the Netila again after the fast since the whole hand was not washed completely in the morning.

**We say Berchat Lebana after the fast terminates**

**BET KNESETH SERVICE TIMINGS FOR THE THREE WEEKS**

**Shabbat Erev Tisha B'Ab – Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

SHAHARIT	8:30 am
MINCHA	6:30 pm
SEUDA SHLISHEET	SEUDA MAFSEKET AT HOME
FAST BEGINS	9:09 pm
SHABBAT TERMINATES	10:18 pm
ARBIT FOLLOWED BY KINOT	10:30 pm

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**ROSH HODESH AB**

SHAHARIT KINOT	8:00 am
MIDDAY	1:07 pm
MINCHA Followed by ARBIT	8:30 pm
FAST TERMINATES	10:18 pm

**Our Rabbis say that those who mourn for Jerusalem will merit to see her in her happiness which will be very soon. AMEN.**

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**NORMAL SERVICE TIMINGS**

**Weekday:** **Shaharit 7:00 am** Followed by Shiur. (Sunday 8:00 am)  
**Mincha 7:30 pm** Followed by Arbit and Shiur

**Shabbat:** **Mincha** (Erev Shabbat) **7:15 pm** followed by Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit  
**Shaharit 8:30 am** followed by **Musaf**  
**Shiur** 40 minutes before sunset  
**Mincha** 40 mins before Sunset followed by  
**Seuda Shlishit & Arbit on termination of Shabbat**

**SPECIAL WEEKLY SHIURIM**

Please note that there are regular shiurim everyday.

**THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF**  
**MR. LEVY KELATY I"z**  
**WHO'S YAHRSEIT FALLS ON 27th AB**  
**(Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2021)**