

## Laws of the Nine Days Rosh Chodesh Av until Tisha B'Av

From the 1st of the month (Rosh Chodesh) of Av through Tisha B'Av, the restrictions and levels of mourning that began on the 17th of Tamuz become more severe. The following is a brief summary of the customs as they pertain to this period between Rosh Chodesh Av and Tisha B'Av, also referred to as the Nine Days.

We are more stringent regarding the customs already being observed:

- Engagements are still encouraged but without festivities
- It is best to suspend listening to all music (unless music is essential for one's livelihood or functioning)
- Purchases of any sort outside of those necessary for daily needs should wait. If a purchase is time dependent such as items for a wedding taking place immediately after Tisha B'Av or once-in-a-lifetime sale items, those items may be bought with discretion
- One should not take a haircut. For men who have been shaving for business-related reasons, it is certainly preferable to stop shaving during this time, although NOT at the risk of losing one's job, customers or clients.

Additionally:

- Eating meat and drinking wine: We abstain from meat and wine since they are associated with celebration and, in particular, the sacrifices in the Temple. The custom applies to fowl and to meat dishes as well. This custom does NOT apply to Shabbat or even to the Havdallah wine after Shabbat (although some have a custom to say Havdallah over beer).
- Cleaning clothes: One should not do laundry during this time, nor should one wear freshly laundered clothes (within a few days of having been washed). This restriction applies to changing linens as well. Washing clothes for children constantly in need of clean clothes is permitted. Again, these restrictions are lifted for Shabbat.
- Showering and swimming: One should keep showering to a minimum and shower just enough to maintain basic hygiene. Cutting nails should be done prior to Rosh Chodesh as well. Once again, one may be more thorough before Shabbat. Swimming for recreation is not in the spirit of the times.
- Diminishing business and travel, building and decorating: It is not in the spirit of these days to be shopping for anything except necessities or to be involved in any major projects outside of our essential endeavors.

***May G-d Rebuild the Temple in Our Day***

## Tisha B'Av- The 9th Day of Av

### Background:

Tisha B'Av is a day of Jewish tragedy. On the 9th of Av, the spies (meraglim) in the desert returned from their mission in Canaan (to become the land of Israel) with their negative report and their assessment that the land could not be conquered. The nation lost faith in G-d and in their mission. The generation that experienced the Exodus from Egypt was thereby sentenced to die in the forty years in the desert, never to enter the land of Israel.

The shortcoming of faith attributed to our ancestors resulted in further consequences on the same day through history. Both the First Temple (in 340 B.C.E. by the Babylonians) and the Second Temple (70 C.E. by the Romans) were destroyed on Tisha B'Av. The Talmud and the Kinot record other tragedies that occurred on the 9th of Av.

### Prohibitions:

Unlike Yom Kippur when we observe restrictions for the sake of purity, the prohibitions of Tisha B'Av are those of mourning, although the abstention from material pleasure and benefit may appear similar.

The prohibitions include 1) eating 2) drinking 3) washing & beautifying 4) wearing formal, leather shoes 5) marital relations 6) studying Torah 7) greeting one another 8) sitting on regular seats.

### Some important exceptions:

Eating and drinking: One who is very ill need not continue the fast. Any medicines which must be taken should be taken without water if possible or less than a shot glass of water.

Washing & beautifying: One can always clean soiled hands, but otherwise one should just wash up to one's knuckles such as prior to prayer or after using the restroom. Washing one's face should also be avoided.

Wearing shoes: For one who is going to work and might feel funny in suit and sneakers, wearing regular shoes is permitted provided one change when not at work.

Sitting: This restriction is lifted at midday.

Studying Torah: Topics and texts that deal with mourning and tragedy are in the spirit of the day and may be studied.

### Liturgy and Customs of the Synagogue:

The curtain is removed from the Ark, as if G-d's "garment" is torn. It is replaced at midday. At night we read the book of Eicha (Lamentations) and add a few kinot (poems of tragedy). In the morning, although Tzitzit are worn without a blessing, Talit and Tefillin are not worn until Mincha.

In addition to Torah reading from Parshat V'etchanan in the morning, there is a Haftorah from Yirmiyah.

Kinot (poems of tragedy) are recited after Shacharit and throughout the morning.

In Mincha, the paragraphs of Nachem (in the blessing over Jerusalem) and Anenu (in Shema Kolenu) are added.

The customs of mourning that applied prior to Tisha B'Av are observed through noon of the following day since the Temple burned through the 10th of Av.

***May G-d rebuild the Temple in our day***