

LAWS OF THE NINE DAYS

Beginning with sunset before Rosh Chodesh Av, (Thursday evening, July 28) the Nine-Day period commences.

MEAT & WINE Except for Shabbos, one may not eat meat or poultry, or consume any food containing meat or poultry. Food cooked in a clean meat pot may be eaten, even if the pot had been used for meat within the last 24 hours. At a Siyum Mesechta, all participants who would normally be invited to such a Siyum would be permitted to eat meat. A Siyum may be made throughout the Nine Day period. It is preferable that a Siyum not be made after the 6th of Av. Wine or grape juice may not be consumed during this period except for Shabbos or at a Seudat Mitzvah.

BATHING During the Nine Days a person may not shower or bathe for pleasure, even in cold water. Swimming or using a sauna is likewise forbidden. If, however, a person is perspired or dirty, he may shower or bathe in lukewarm water and even use soap or shampoo if he or she will not become clean otherwise. Under any circumstance, washing one's hands, face and feet in cold water is permitted.

LAUNDRY, CLOTHING & CLEANING One is permitted to polish silver or wash one's car during this period; however, shampooing rugs would be prohibited. It is forbidden to wash or dry clean one's clothing & linen during the Nine Days, even if it is done by a non-Jew. Ironing clothing is also prohibited. Even giving garments to a dry cleaner during the Nine Days to be picked up after the Nine Days is not allowed. However, one may give clothing to the cleaners before Rosh Chodesh if he picks them up after Tisha B'Av. Small children's clothing may be washed during the Nine Days. One may not wear new or freshly laundered clothing or linen during the Nine Days except for undergarments. It is preferable to wear all shirts briefly before the Nine Days commence. Purchasing new clothing is forbidden during the Nine Days, even if they will be worn after the Nine Days. This prohibition includes all types of clothing, even those upon which a She'hecheyanu is not recited. However, Tisha B'Av sneakers may be bought if one was unable to buy them previously. It is permissible to go window shopping during the Nine Days, even if you derive pleasure from this activity. It is permissible to purchase clothing, furniture, appliances, etc. during the Nine Days if they are on sale or you'll suffer a substantial loss if you will delay the purchase. Included in this category would be an individual who finds himself in a particular locale during the Nine Laws of The Nine Days & Tisha B'Av Days where these items can be found but are not readily available in their neighborhood. Exchanges during the Nine Days of items that were purchased prior to Rosh Chodesh may be done even though you are receiving a new item in return. It is permissible to sew a tear or to sew on a button. Although knitting and crocheting are forbidden, needlepoint is permissible.

MISCELLANEOUS Any form of home decorating should not be done during the Nine Days including planting trees or flowers in the garden. It is, however, permissible to water, mow the lawn or prune trees during this period of time.

When Erev Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat, as it does this year, certain changes from the normal 'Erev Tisha B'Av' routine are required. The following is a brief guideline of the changes specific to such a year.

SEUDAH HAMFSEKET Normally, the final meal before Tisha B'Av ("Seudah Mafseket") is eaten in "mourning", sitting on the floor, eating a piece of bread and a hard-boiled egg with some ashes. When Erev Tisha B'Av is Shabbat, however, these practices do not apply since no mourning is allowed on Shabbat. A proper "Shabbat" meal should be eaten at Seudah Shlishit, and this meal may even include meat and wine. This meal should take place after mincha, and care must be taken to complete this meal, including birkat hamazon, before sunset. To accommodate this, mincha Shabbat afternoon this week will be scheduled earlier than usual, giving people the opportunity to prepare sufficiently.

HAVDALAH Since one cannot drink the wine of Havdala on Saturday night (because of the fast), Havdala is NOT made immediately after Shabbat. Instead, only the blessing on the candle (Borei me'orei ha'esh) is made, which we will do in shul after ma'ariv. After the fast ends Sunday evening, Havdala is recited over a cup of wine. At that time, the opening paragraph of Havdalah, as well as the blessing over spices, are omitted. Note: If one needs to break his or her fast and eat on Tisha B'Av itself, one should say the Havdala, as described above, just prior to breaking his or her fast.

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Please note the changes in the schedule as follows: **Gemara Shiur (Tisha B'Av Selections) 6:00 pm; Mincha 7:00 pm; Extended Seudah Shlishit must be finished by 8:04 pm; Fast begins 8:04 pm; Introduction to Eicha by Rabbi Polakoff 8:10 pm; Shabbat ends 8:54 pm; Maariv, Eicha & Kinot 9:10 pm.** Maariv, Eicha & Kinnot begin at 9:10 pm to allow people time after Shabbat to change into Tisha B'Av shoes and return to shul in 'Tisha B'Av mode'.

Reminder to those who will be in shul on Shabbat afternoon to bring their Tisha B'Av shoes with them to shul before Shabbat on Friday afternoon as it is improper to bring your shoes with you to shul on Shabbat as it is considered preparing for after Shabbat. Please remember that after Shabbat ends, one should say the words: "Baruch Hamavdil ben kodesh l'chol," before doing any Melacha, or preparing for Tisha B'Av (including changing into Tisha B'Av shoes).

MOTZEI TISHA B'AV (Sunday) In addition to Havdalah, another distinction exists regarding the end of the fast (Sunday evening) this year. Generally, the restrictions of the 9 days continue in force until mid-day the next day, reflecting the historical fact that the Temple burned through the 10th of Av. However, in a year in which Tisha B'Av is a nidcheh (postponed from Shabbat), the date of the fast day is already the 10th of Av. On such a year, all the restrictions of the 9 days end with the fast itself, with the exception of the restriction on meat and wine which remain in force till the next morning. One may, however, drink the wine of Havdalah as mentioned above. Thus, one may do laundry, bathe, swim, take a haircut, shave, listen to music, etc. all beginning Sunday night immediately after the fast.

ADDITIONAL LAWS OF TISHA BA'V

Eating and Drinking - All eating and drinking is forbidden. This includes rinsing the mouth and brushing teeth. Pregnant and nursing women should begin the fast, but may break it upon feeling significant discomfort. Please consult one of us if you have a question.

Bathing and Washing - All bathing for pleasure is prohibited even in cold water including the hands, face and feet. Ritual washing upon waking and washing after using the bathroom or before praying is permitted, but only up to the knuckles. One may wash dirty or sullied portions of the body (including cleaning the eyes of glutinous material). Washing for cooking or for medical reasons is permitted.

Anointing - Anointing for pleasure is prohibited including oil, soap, alcohol, cream, ointment, perfume, etc. Anointing for medical reasons is permitted, as well as using deodorant to remove bad odor.

Marital Relations - Since cohabitation is prohibited, a husband and wife should avoid contact during the night of Tisha B'Av.

Wearing Leather Shoes - Even shoes made partially of leather are prohibited. Shoes made of cloth, rubber or plastic are permitted. Wearing leather shoes is permitted for medical reasons.

Learning Torah - Since the heart rejoices in the study of Torah, it is prohibited to learn topics other than those relevant to Tisha B'Av or mourning. One may learn: Lamentations with its midrash and commentaries, portions of the Prophets that deal with tragedy or destruction, the third chapter of Moed Katan (which deals with mourning), the story of the destruction (in Gittin 56b-58a, Sanhedrin 104, and in Josephus), and the halachot of Tisha B'Av and mourning.

Additional Restrictions - One should deprive himself of some comfort in sleep (reducing the number of pillows, etc.) Pregnant women, the elderly and the ill need not do this. Sitting on a normal chair is forbidden until midday. One may sit on a low bench or chair, or on a cushion on the floor.

Greeting someone with "good morning" and the like is prohibited. One who is greeted should answer softly and not risk embarrassing someone else. If appropriate, inform the person of the prohibition.

One should not give a gift except to the needy.

The custom is to refrain until midday from any time-consuming work that diverts one from mourning.

In merit of our sincere observance of this time of mourning, may we merit the fulfillment of our hopes and prayers for the rebuilding of Yerushalayim.