



LAWS OF THE THREE WEEKS

As we have mentioned before, the seventeenth of Tammuz begins the period of the time called the three weeks, during which there is a minhag to observe some conduct of mourning. There are varying

degrees of intensity of mourning as we get closer to Tisha B'Av. Some of these restrictions begin from the seventeenth of Tammuz, some from the first of Av and some during the week in which Tisha B'Av occurs and some on Erev Tisha B'Av, concluding with the most severe restrictions and conduct which apply to Tish B'Av itself.

During the entire three week period, there is a custom to curtail rejoicing as an outward manifestation of the sadness and sorrow that we feel during this time period. Weddings aren't performed during this period of time, even if there is no music or dancing. Engagement, however, may take place until Rosh Chodesh Av even if there is a meal served along with them. From Rosh Chodesh Av until after Tisha B'Av engagements may take place, however, a meal may not be served.

Dancing and musical instruments are prohibited during the three weeks. One who is a musician or earns his living by playing for non-Jews can continue to play his instrument for non-Jews until Rosh Chodesh Av. On the seventeenth of Tammuz itself, though, this should not be done. If one is learning how to play a musical instrument, practicing and lessons can take place through Rosh Chodesh Av.

The custom is to refrain from reciting the *brocha* of *Shehechianu* on new garments or fruits and such during the three weeks. Therefore, we do not purchase the garments which would necessitate the recitation of the *Shehechianu*. As far as fruit is concerned, many *Poskim* permit saying the *Shehechianu* on Shabbos if the fruit can last until Shabbos. If not, and it is impossible to do it in any other way, it is permissible to eat the fruit and recite the *Shehechianu* even during the week.

During this period, haircuts and shaving are prohibited. However, if the moustache is getting in the way it is permissible to cut it where necessary. A person who shaves every day and must do this because of his job, is permitted to do so only when absolutely necessary. However, even such a person should refrain from Rosh Chodesh Av or at least, during the week in which Tish B'Av occurs.

PLEASE NOTE: EVEN WHEN IT IS PERMISSIBLE TO SHAVE THAT IS ONLY FOR BUSINESS. ON SUNDAYS OR ON DAYS WHEN ONE CAN GET AWAY WITHOUT IT, IT IS CERTAINLY BEST TO REFRAIN FROM SHAVING DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME.

Although both men and women are included in this prohibition of haircuts, this applies for women to the hair on their heads. However, it is permissible for to shave hair from the other parts of their bodies.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE NINE DAYS AND TISHA B'AV

From Rosh Chodesh Av until midday on the Tenth of Av, is a period called "The Nine Days." There are additional prohibitions added to those already in force from the 17th of Tammuz. The prohibitions correspond to those of *Shloshim*, the 30 day period of mourning for a close relative.

Mishenichnas Av Mima'atin Bisimcha

- From the beginning of the month of Av, joy is diminished. Beginning with Rosh Chodesh all forms of simcha and rejoicing are suspended.
- Some additional areas of joy not already prohibited from the 17th of Tammuz are: Purchasing items that are not absolutely necessary and will be available after the 9th of Av at the same price; construction for pleasure (ie. home improvements, patio, etc.) should be suspended during this time; painting of one's home; and planting trees and plants for pleasure.

To Refrain from Eating Meat and Drinking Wine

- To refrain from eating meat and drinking wine is a custom. Two reasons are given for this *minhag*: meat and wine are symbols of joy and we recall the sacrifices of meat and wine which were suspended because of the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdosh*. This prohibition does not apply for Shabbos or a *seudas mitzvah* (ie. *bris milah*.)
- It is customary on the Saturday night of the Nine Days to give the wine from Havdalah to a child under bar/bat mitzvah to drink.
- This prohibition applies also to chicken and to foods cooked with meat or fat of meat. Food cooked in a meat vessel, but free of actual meat may be eaten during The Nine Days.

LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE NINE DAYS

- In the case of illness a Rabbi should be consulted.
- **Cleaning and Laundering Clothing**
 - A mourner during *Shloshim* may not clean or launder his clothing, nor may he wear freshly laundered garments. Similarly, the *minhag* is not to clean or launder clothing during the entire Nine Days. But, if a person has only one garment or all his clothes are dirty, it is permissible to clean a garment until the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av.
 - Children's diapers and clothing may be cleaned during the entire Nine Days. Similarly, freshly laundered garments are not worn during the Nine Days. New garments should not be purchased until after the 9th of Av (Tisha B'Av.)

Bathing and Swimming

- Bathing and swimming for pleasure are prohibited during the Nine Days.
- Where necessary to remove dirt or perspiration, bathing is permissible.

- Many *poskim* hold that one who bathes (or showers) every *erev Shabbos*, may bathe (or shower) on the *erev Shabbos* before Tisha B'Av.

EREV TISHA B'AV
Monday, August 4th
Seudah Hamafsekes:
The Final Meal

- Normally, on the Eighth of Av, before the fast begins, the final meal we eat has some special requirements. The purpose of this meal is to experience sorrow and mourning for the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdosh*.
- The final meal should be preceded by a regular meal.
- The final meal consists of bread and hard boiled eggs.
- This meal should be eaten while sitting on the floor, and many have the custom of dipping the bread into some ashes.

TISHA B'AV
Tuesday, August 5th

Many tragedies befell our people on Tisha B'Av. In the time of exodus, it was decreed that our forefathers would remain in the desert and not enter *Eretz Yisroel* because of the sins of the spies.

These tragedies included the first and the second *Bais Hamikdosh* being destroyed on Tisha B'Av; the city of Betar was captured and tens of thousands of Jews were killed; the wicked Turnus Rufus plowed the site of the *Bais Hamikdosh* and its surroundings; in 1942 the Arabanel was forced to lead 75,000 Jews out of Spain; and World War One began on Tisha B'Av.

PROHIBITIONS ON TISHA B'AV

The fast of Tisha B'Av is similar to the fast of Yom Kippur in its requirements and prohibitions. The prohibitions of Tisha B'Av correspond to a mourner in Shiva.

Fasting

- Everyone (including pregnant and nursing women) is required to fast. In the case of illness, or in the case of pregnant or nursing women, if there are problems, consult the Rabbi.

- Children under the age of 12 (girls) or 13 (boys) are not required to fast. Even those who are not required to fast on Tisha B'Av should not indulge or eat more than is necessary to preserve their health.

Bathing or Washing

- All washing and bathing for pleasure is prohibited on Tisha B'Av. In the morning, or after going to the bathroom, when one is required to wash their hands, one should wash only up to the joints on the end of his fingers (like on Yom Kippur.)

Other Prohibitions

- Anointing oneself for pleasure is prohibited on Tisha B'Av. Although the use of perfume on the body is prohibited, the use of deodorant is permissible.
- Marital relations is prohibited on Tisha B'Av.
- Wearing leather shoes (or synthetic ones that look like leather) is prohibited on Tisha B'Av (like Yom Kippur.)
- Since the heart rejoices from the study of Torah learning, it is prohibited, except for those portions and topics which are relevant to Tisha B'Av and morning.
- On Tisha B'Av it is prohibited to greet someone (like a mourner is prohibited to greet and be greeted.)
- Levity and merriment are prohibited.
- During the evening of Tisha B'Av and in the morning until noon, sitting on a bench or chair is prohibited.
- One may sit on the floor – even on a cushion or on a low bench or chair.
- Driving is *not* prohibited on Tisha B'Av.
- Those things prohibited during The Three Weeks and The Nine Days are not permitted until after noon on the Tenth of Av (since the Temple smoldered until noon on the tenth.)
- Tallis and Tefillin are not worn until Mincha.