

SHABBAT CHAZON & TISH'A B'AV REVIEW

Please consider this review as an educational tool; actual halachic questions should be put to your LOR (local Orthodox rabbi). This is especially true of personal circumstances that are in any way out of the ordinary.

The Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av is known as SHABBAT CHAZON. The name derives from the Haftara which is read, the first chapter of Yeshayahu.

Cleaning the house and other preparations for Shabbat are as usual.

Although we do not eat meat during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat), one may taste (without swallowing) food being cooked for Shabbat to determine its flavor-needs.

Many authorities permit bathing and dressing for Shabbat as one would usually do for any other Shabbat. (This is the standard practice in Israel.)

Others impose some restrictions, such as washing with less pleasant water (temperature-wise), and not bathing the entire body at one time.

One may cut his/her fingernails during the first part of the 9 Days, but not during the week in which 9Av falls.

One may wear fresh garments for Shabbat, but not new ones. Some say that they should be put on only right before Shabbat.

Many shuls sing L'cha Dodi to the tune of "Eli Tzion" from Tish'a b'Av morning. Some frown upon this custom as a public sign of mourning on Shabbat. Nonetheless, it is a common custom.

It is okay to drink wine and eat meat once a person has taken Shabbat, even if it is before sunset.

Many shuls read the pasuk beginning with the word "Eicha" (D'varim 1:12) to the tune of Eicha. Some object to this custom, too, but it is the common practice. As a corollary to this custom, the first Aliya is ended one pasuk short of "Sheini" so that the second Aliya does not begin with EICHA. [In all of the above, don't be surprised if your shul does or does not do what is described here as a "wide-spread" practice.]

The Haftara for Shabbat Chazon is mostly read with the Eicha melody. Once again, some object to this minhag as well. The rabbi of the shul or a prominent member of the congregation is usually given Maftir.

Shabbat meals are as usual, including meat and wine. The custom of not eating meat or drinking wine during the Nine Days does not apply to Shabbat - another example of "no public display of mourning on Shabbat". One may have meat and wine at all meals on Shabbat, even if this is more than he would usually do. If one is eating meat at the Third Meal, and the meal extends into the night, he still may continue to eat meat. Some disagree and hold that one should stop eating meat at nightfall, even if one hasn't ended his Shabbat.

[Be aware of the fact that the actual halachic prohibition of eating meat and drinking wine applies to the SEUDA HAMAFASEKET, the pre-Tish'a b'Av meal. The extension of this ban to the Nine Days is essentially based on custom. The custom of one's community must be followed, but knowing that the issue is not DIN throughout helps explain the different practices of different EIDOT.]

It will serve us well to think of meat & wine on Shabbat

Chazon, not only in the negative (no public display of mourning, therefore...), but also in a positive way. Shabbat is called "a foretaste of the World to Come". Shabbat Chazon allows us a glimpse into the (hopefully near) future when the prophecy of Zacharia will come to be and Tish'a b'Av and its three satellite fasts will become joyous days. We might look at Shabbat as a down payment from G-d, so to speak, on His promise for the future.

Havdala: Some say that since Havdala of Shabbat Chazon is said after Shabbat is over, then one should not drink wine, since wine is forbidden during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat). One would then choose a beverage for Havdala that is known as CHAMAR MEDINA, a drink of some importance in our society. Check with your LOR for the approved drinks list.

The other opinion holds that THE proper beverage for Havdala is WINE (except in cases of "great need", such as, there is no wine or you are allergic to it). If you use wine and there is a child present at Havdala who is old enough to understand the concept of Brachot but too young to understand Mourning the CHURBAN, then he/she should drink the wine of Havdala. (Too young and no real understanding of brachot does not absolve the Havdala maker from drinking. Old enough to mourn the loss of the Mikdash, then he/she also shouldn't be drinking wine during the Nine Days.) If not, the one saying Havdala should drink the wine. Some say that he should not finish the whole cup, but suffice with a ROV R'VI'IT. Others say to drink the whole cup so that the after-bracha can be said.

SHAVUA SHECHAL BO

The week in which Tish'a b'Av falls has stricter rules than the first part of the Nine Days. E.g. those who shave during the Three Weeks and even after Rosh Chodesh Av, should at least not shave during SHAVU'A SHECHAL BO.

EREV TISH'A B'AV

Some authorities forbid regular Torah learning in the afternoon of Erev 9Av, permitting only those topics which are permitted on Tish'a b'Av itself.

There is a strict opinion that one should not eat regular meals after noon - only the SEUDA HAMAFASEKET. Realistically, this opinion is too difficult to follow, and, in fact, is not followed. The usual practice is to eat a regular meal in the late afternoon, followed by Mincha (if that works out), and then to have the special pre-fast "meal", shortly before the onset of the fast.

SEUDA HAMAFASEKET traditionally consists of bread (or pita) and a hard boiled egg, and water. Some dip the egg and/or bread in ash.

Officially, there are many rules concerning what may and may not be eaten at this pre-fast meal. Since most people will have recently eaten a "regular" supper, it is most common to have SEUDA HAMAFASEKET with just bread, egg, and water.

This is a mourner's meal, appropriate for pre-9Av. It should be eaten alone, to avoid "benching mezuman". Some sit on the floor or low seat for this meal. The meal is eaten and the Birkat HaMazon is said with a heavy heart, realizing the enormity of the Churban.

As is true throughout Tish'a b'Av, it is very important that one's thoughts be on the mournful nature and seriousness of the day.

LEIL TISH'A B'AV

The prohibitions of Tish'a b'Av should begin a few minutes before sunset. For Jerusalem this year, we should stop eating, etc. a few minutes before 7:35pm. (Although the common practice for Erev YK is to begin the fast

at candle lighting, for 9Av a token amount of time before sunset is sufficient. Think 7:30ish.)

Maariv is recited in a low, mournful tone. Then Megilat Eicha is read while people sit on the ground or on low stools. It is customary to reduce the lighting in shul and remove the curtain of the Ark and the covers of the Amud and Shulchan.

When Eicha is read from parchment, as it is in many shuls in Jerusalem, the bracha AL MIKRA MEGILA is recited (but not She'he'che'yanu).

Following Eicha some kinot (poems of lament) are chanted.

3 aspects of 9Av laws...

[1] The prohibitions of Yom Kippur-like fasts viz. (a) no eating or drinking, (b) no washing except for fingertips for ritual washing and the washing of actual dirtied areas of the body, (c) no cosmetics or lotions (medications and unscented deodorant are permitted), (d) no wearing of leather shoes, including shoes or sneakers with tops or soles of leather, (e) no marital relations;

[2] practices related to mourning, such as no Torah-learning except sad themes such as Eicha and Job, parts of other books of Tanach, the laws of Tish'a b'Av, the laws of mourning, etc., no exchange of greetings, sitting on the ground; and

[3] a reduction of luxuries and comfort, such as making sleeping conditions less comfortable.

Tish'a b'Av day

In the morning, one should wash only the fingers (and eyes, if necessary).

Shacharit: Talit & T'filin are not worn. No Birkat Kohanim. Davening is regular but subdued. We omit the bracha OTER YISRAEL B'TIF'ARA, as this is considered a reference to T'filin, the crown of glory of the Jew. The bracha will be said at Mincha when one does put on T'filin. [GR"A's opinion is also to skip SHE'ASA LI KOL TZORKI in the morning brachot, which alludes to having good shoes. This bracha is said after the fast, when one puts on leather shoes.]

On the other hand, it is surprising that we don't say Avinu Malkein, Tachanun, Lamnatzei'ach, or Slichot, any and all of which we might expect on a fast day. Tish'a b'Av, however, is referred to as a MO'ED and will IY"H be a festival when the Beit HaMikdash is rebuilt. As a sign of our complete confidence in this promise of the Messianic times, we treat Tish'a b'Av now as a festival in these token ways.

Special 9Av Torah reading (from Va-etchanan) and Haftara (from Yirmiyahu, read with the Eicha tune) are followed by Kinot which should ideally continue until noontime. Some read Eicha in the morning, too.

Thinking about Churban Beit HaMikdash (and other tragedies associated with 9Av) is essential.

One should refrain from that which would cause the mind to wander from the day's thoughts.

Although most restrictions continue throughout the entire day, a few are relaxed at mincha-time. The Parochet is returned to the Ark, lighting in shul is restored to normal, talit and t'filin are worn, Kohanim bless the People, and sitting on regular chairs is permitted. This, in essence, transforms Tish'a b'Av into a "regular" fast day and psychologically allows us to reflect on the consolation of the prophecies of the Geula and the Building of the Third Beit HaMikdash.

Torah and Haftara readings for Mincha are like other

fast-days. The passages of NACHEIM and ANEINU are inserted into the Jerusalem bracha and Sh'ma Koleinu respectively. Omitting either of these additions does not require repeating the Amida. However, Nacheim can be said in R'TZEI and either or both can be said right before YIHU L'RATZON.

Motza'ei Tish'a b'Av

The fast ends approx. 8:05pm. Maariv is regular. One should wash his hands ritually (if possible, for Maariv; if not, right afterwards), since it had not been "properly" done in the morning.

Some say Kiddush L'vana right after Tish'a b'Av (preferably after breaking the fast). Others will have said K.L. during the previous week (based on Minhag Yerushalayim). Others will wait for Motza'ei Shabbat Nachamu.

The 10th of Av is the day that most of the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed. Since the Beit HaMikdash started burning on the 9th of Av, and because of other events associated with the 9th, Chazal fixed the fast day on the 9th. Since the 10th is part of the commemoration of the Churban, the restrictions of the Nine Days continue after the fast. The custom is to keep the restrictions until halachic noon of the 10th of Av (12:45pm this year).

This applies to not eating meat and drinking wine and listening to joyous music.

Marital relations are forbidden on the eve of the 10th of Av, unless it is the "mikve" night. There are other circumstances that would permit relations - this should be checked out with a Rav.

This year, with the 10th of Av being Erev Shabbat, haircutting, shaving, bathing, and laundry are all permitted from Thursday night (some say first thing Friday morning), rather than noon on Friday. Pleasurable swimming, however, as opposed to bathing for cleanliness, is allowed only after CHATZOT on Friday.

Something to think about...

Several events in Jewish history are associated with 9Av that are not mentioned in the Mishna in Taanit. Major expulsions of Jews from different countries began on 9Av, or were decreed on 9Av, or are in some way linked to 9Av. Some massacres are associated with Tish'a b'Av. We must view them in an appropriate perspective. Simply put, the troubles we have suffered throughout the many centuries of exile are directly related to the exile itself and the causes of it. Pogroms, Crusades, the Holocaust, all spanned the calendar from one end to the other. Yet we still put these events in the 9Av context.

Visiting Yad VaShem (if it's open) or reading Holocaust literature is certainly appropriate for Tish'a b'Av. These thoughts should be kept in mind by parents who are interested in suggesting meaningful activities and readings for their children during the Nine Days and on 9Av.

Sometimes a child might not be able to relate to events that occurred thousands of years ago, but might be "into" Holocaust study, for instance. The Holocaust was a Churban too. All of Jewish History has been greatly influenced and shaped by events that occurred since we became a nation.

The sin of the spies should also be a focus of our thoughts at this time.

May we merit the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, speedily in our time, **ימן**.