

Shabbat Chazon & Tish'a b'Av

REVIEW

This is an educational tool; actual halachic questions should be put to a Rav. This is especially true of circumstances that are 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 for Parshat D'varim, 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 common practice in Israel.) Others impose some restrictions of the Nine Days, such as washing only with less pleasant water (temperature-wise), and not bathing the entire body at one time.

Suggestion: Those who usually take baths should opt for a shower on Erev Shabbat Chazon.

One may cut his/her fingernails on Erev Shabbat Chazon - only during the week in which 9Av falls, is it forbidden.

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 kinot. Some frown upon this custom as a public display of mourning on Shabbat. Nonetheless, it is a common custom.

It is permissible 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.

The Haftara for Shabbat Chazon is mostly read with the Eicha melody. The rabbi of the shul or a prominent member of the congregation is usually honored with 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 - part 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.

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 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. As mentioned earlier, cutting one's nails is not permitted. Psychologically, one should be "aware" of the increase in mournful practice and feelings (even if it does not show in practice as different.

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 SEUDA HAMAFASEKET. Realistically, this opinion is too difficult for most people to follow, and, in fact, it 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 HaMafseket 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 HAMA FSEKET 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. Many have the custom to recite AL NAHAROT BAVEL for this meal, even if they don't say it on a regular basis as the alternative to SHIR HAMAALOT.

As is true throughout 9Av, it is very important that one's thoughts be on the mournful and serious nature of the day, while one is eating this meager pre-fast meal.

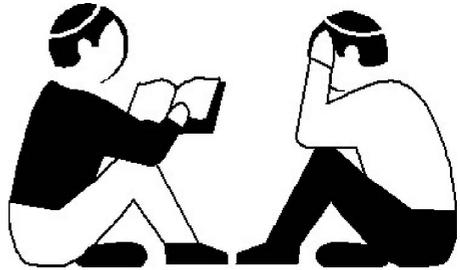
LEIL TISH'A B'AV

The prohibitions of Tish'a b'Av should begin a few minutes before sunset. For Jerusalem this year, we should stop eating, drinking, etc. a few minutes before 7:43pm.

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 some shuls in Jerusalem, the bracha AL MIKRA MEGILA is recited (but not Shehecheyanu).

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 for sad themes such as the books of Eicha and Iyov, certain parts of other

books of Tanach, the laws of Tish'a b'Av, the laws of mourning, etc.); no exchange of social greetings (mazal tov is permitted, however), 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, with one's wet fingertips).

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 minhag 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.]

OTOH, we don't say Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun, Lamnatzei'ach, or Slichot, any and all of which we might expect on a fast day. Tish'a b'Av 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 confidence in this promise of the Geula, we treat Tish'a b'Av now as a festival in these token ways. Rav Soloveitchik has a very different explanation based on SATAM T'FILATI (Eicha 3:8) so we reduce, not increase our prayer.

Special 9Av Torah reading (from Va'etchanan) and Haftara (from Yirmiyahu, read mostly with the Eicha tune) are followed by Kinot which should ideally continue until halachic noon (approx. 12:45pm). Some read Eicha in the morning.

Thinking about Churban Beit HaMikdash - and other tragedies associated with 9Av - is essential, whether one is fasting or not.

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

AFTER NOON: Although most restrictions continue throughout the day, a few are relaxed at mincha-time. The Parochet is returned to the Ark, lighting in shul is restored, talit and t'filin are worn, Kohanim bless the People, and sitting on regular chairs is permitted. This, in essence, almost transforms Tish'a b'Av into a "regular" fast day and allows us to reflect on the consolation of the prophecies of the Geula and the Building of the 3rd 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, one does not go back. However, Nacheim can be said within R'TZEI (without the closing bracha of V'irushalayim) and either/both can be said before YIHYU L'RATZON at the end of the Amida.

MOTZA'EI TISH'A B'AV

The fast ends approx. 8:06pm (some say 8:17). Maariv is regular. One should try to wash his whole hands ritually (if possible) for Maariv, 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 - bring a light snack with you to Maariv). Others will have said KL 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 burned. Because it started burning on the 9th, and because of other events associated with the 9th, Chazal fixed the fast day on the 9th. But the restrictions of the 9 Days continue beyond the fast. Restrictions apply until halachic noon of the 10th of Av (12:46pm this year). This applies to not eating meat and drinking wine, listening to joyous music, bathing, laundry, etc. Marital relations are forbidden on the eve of the 10th of Av, unless it is the "mikve" night. There are other special circumstances - ask a Rav.

Because 10 Av is Erev Shabbat this year, laundry and shaving and other preparations for Shabbat may be done from the morning. Some say, even Thursday night, is necessary.

PONDER THIS... Several events in Jewish history are associated with 9Av. 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 9Av. 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 entire calendar. Yet these events still have a 9Av context. It is therefore appropriate to include in one's thoughts of the day - and activities, such as reading, videos, etc. Holocaust material, and the like.

May our T'shuva, fasting, and prayers - and our love of Torah, Am Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael, combine with our pro-active, positive steps towards spreading that love and Torah observance to our fellow Jews... all combine to hasten the Geula Sh'leima. May we merit the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash,
במהרה בימינו, אמן.



Photo of model of the Beit HaMikdash by Catriel Sugarman