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TISHA B'AV NEWSLETTER 5780

The three weeks from the 17th Tammuz until Tisha B'Ab is a period of mourning for the Jewish people. On these dates our people suffered their greatest tragedies and punishments. It was on the 17th of Tammuz when Moshe Rabenu descended from Mount Sinai with the **Luchoth Ha Berit** containing the Ten Commandments to find the B'nei Yisrael rejoicing with the idol of the golden calf. He immediately shattered the **Luchoth** written by the hand of G-d and punished the offenders. But the day was set for other tragedies which would follow: The walls of Jerusalem were breached on that day at the time of the 2nd destruction, the daily offering of the **Tamid** was discontinued at the time of the Greek Siege, and Apostomous, the Roman ruler publicly burnt the **Sefer Torah** and placed an idol in the Temple.

On Tisha B'Ab the **Meraglim** (spies that Moshe Rabenu sent to spy out the land) returned and gave their bad report about the land which turned the hearts of our people and their faith in G-d's promise to take them into the Holy Land. They rebelled and cried in desperation without cause. Thus the day was fixed by G-d as a day of lamentation and retribution for future generations. A day when it would seem that the protecting hand of G-d was removed from his children. On this date both the first and second temples were destroyed, our great cities in Israel were levelled and our people were butchered and exiled. Even in later generations tragedies fell on this day. The exile from Spain and the end of the golden era took place on this day as did many of the pogroms and persecutions in Europe.

We fast and mourn on Tisha B'Ab for what has been lost not in desperation, but in hope for we now know that if we repent and correct the causes that have brought on these calamities worked by G-d the Almighty, His promises will be fulfilled and He will return the **Shechina** to Zion and the temple will be rebuilt. We have seen the fulfilment of the destruction exactly as prophesied in the Torah and **Neveim**, now we can look forward to the prophecy of the redemption and salvation as Rabbi Akiva pointed out to his companions in the Talmud **Macott** when they cried at the sight of the Temple Mount in desolation. He laughed, then explained why he did so; for until he had seen the prophecy of Uria that Zion would become a ploughed field because of our deeds, he could not be sure of the prophecy of Zacharia; that Jerusalem would be filled with people living a full long life and the in gathering of our people from the corners of the earth. But now that the first and terrible part had come true, he could look forward to the redemption and promise. It is on the afternoon of Tisha B'Ab that we say the verses of **Nahamu Nahamu**, consolation for in the destruction we see the seeds of redemption those who mourn for Jerusalem will see and take part in its happiness which will be very soon.

AMEN

Dayan A. David

SOME LAWS AND CUSTOMS FOR THE 3 WEEKS LEADING UP TO TISHA B'AB

Our physical enjoyment is progressively curtailed during the 3 weeks leading up to Tisha B'Ab to remind us of the tragedies that occurred during this time. This is done in four stages:

Stage 1 - begins on Thursday 9th July 2020

- 1.1 Even though according to the Shulchan Aruch it is permitted to marry after the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Hodesh Ab, it is customary not to do so as it does not bode well. If necessary an engagement can be made without a party, music, just refreshments even after Rosh Hodesh.

- 1.2 Parties dancing and playing of music is forbidden during the three weeks and even on the night before a **Brit Mila (Aghdil Yas)** the playing of music should be avoided. But Shirim and Tishbahoht can be sung. Music can be played for the Brit Mila itself, if there is a definite minhag to do so, but nowadays we do not have such a custom here. Even the playing of music at classes is forbidden during the 3 weeks. In summer camps or play groups where games are played to keep young children occupied, music can be played to control the children.
- 1.3 Music even with tape recorder or over the radio would be forbidden in this period.
- 1.4 During the three weeks commencing on the 17th Tammuz, until the 10th of Ab we should refrain from eating new fruit or wearing new clothes since we are not allowed to make Berchat Shehechyanu. But a pregnant woman who desires a new fruit, or a sick person who needs to eat, should make the beracha. The Beracha can be made for a Mitzvah such as **Pideon Haben and Brit Mila**, according to our Sefardi minhag.
- 1.5 A person who has already made the beracha haetz on new fruit since he has to eat it anyhow should also make the shehechyanu. There are poskim who say he should eat it without shehechyanu.
- 1.6 During these 3 weeks we should be careful not to strike a child or pupil or do anything that might involve the slightest danger.

Stage 2 - begins on Rosh Hodesh Ab (Wednesday 22nd July 2020)

- 2.1 According to our Minhag, it is forbidden to buy, sew or wear new clothes from Rosh Hodesh Ab but where one would have to pay more later, it is considered saving a loss therefore it is permitted to buy but not to wear them. Repairs etc. on clothes are allowed.
- 2.2 From Rosh Hodesh until after Tisha B'Ab, one should avoid any court case or legal battle with a non-Jew. It is not a good time for us.
- 2.3 One must refrain from making preparations or shopping for a wedding from Rosh Hodesh Ab unless there is no time later or if the article is cheaper at the time.
- 2.4 Building or decorating for pleasure and beauty should not be done during the nine days but for one who started before consult your Rabbi. This prohibition does not apply to a Beth Hamedrash.
- 2.5 Our minhag is to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine from the 2nd day of Ab until after the fast except during Shabbat and having wine for havdala on Motzei Shabbat. Any meat foods left over from Shabbat may be eaten on Motzei Shabbat. The Ben Ish Hai brings the custom not to eat meat even at Seuda Mitzvah i.e. Brit Mila, Pideon Haben, Siyum Mesechta even though the halacha permits it.
- 2.6 Women who are pregnant or feeding or people who are ill and young children who need to eat meat should be given chicken but if it is necessary for them to have meat then they may.
- 2.7 Our Minhag is not to have a bath during the nine days commencing on Rosh Hodesh Ab. However, those who usually go to the Mikva may do so even on Erev Shabbat (Chazon). It is also permitted to wash the face, hands and legs with hot water **Lichbod Shabbat**. A bath for medical reasons is permitted. There are some who refrain from a bath only on the week of Tisha B'Ab itself. This minhag is generally followed in hot climates and where people are particular to shower frequently. According to this opinion one could have a shower on erev Shabbat Chazon.

Stage 3 - The week of Tisha B'Ab, (Shavuah She Chal Bo Tisha B'Ab)

- 3.1 It is forbidden to have a haircut or to shave on the week of Tisha B'Ab. This applies to children as well. The minhag of the Ari was to refrain for the three weeks. Some poskim do not allow a man to comb his hair even when hair is dry.
- 3.2 It is forbidden to wash clothes or wear cleaned clothes during the week of Tisha B'Ab. So if we wish to change a shirt or underwear, they should be worn for an hour in the previous week and set aside to be worn later. We are permitted to change clothes for Shabbat. Nappies and babies clothes may be washed when necessary. The mohel, sandak and parents of the baby can wear Shabbat clothes at a Brit Mila.
- 3.3 Nails should not be cut on the week of Tisha B'ab but if it protrudes over the flesh, it is permitted.

Stage 4 – Seuda Mafseket – Wednesday 29th July 2020

- 4.1 For the final meal before the fast we eat bread with 1 cooked dish, even a soft boiled egg and a hard boiled egg would be considered two different dishes, but a cooked meal with many ingredients cooked in the usual way is considered one dish. The minhag in Baghdad was to have rice cooked with lentils for Seuda Mafseket and it was considered one dish as it was usually cooked like that. Most people have a boiled egg with bread.
- 4.2 One is allowed to eat fruit and vegetables and not cooked dairy products with this meal but it is good to avoid them for reducing ones pleasure.
- 4.3 Any meal before this has no restriction.
- 4.4 We do not sit on a normal chair for eating the final meal, we sit on a rug or cushion. Three men do not sit together to eat this meal so as not to be obligated for Zimun.
- 4.5 If we finish the meal early we are allowed to drink or snack after the meal before sunset 8:52pm, if we had in mind not to accept the fast when completing the Sueda Mafseket.

Stage 5 – Fast of the 9th Ab – Wednesday 29th July 2020

The fast starts Wednesday 29th July 2020 at 8:52pm and finishes Thursday 30th July 2020 at 9:42pm

- 5.1 Even pregnant women and nursing mothers are obliged to fast on Tisha B'Ab unlike the other three public fasts. But a woman who has given birth within 30 days need not fast unless she feels strong enough. If a person is ill and feels weak he does not need to fast all day on Tisha B'Ab but he should start the fast for some hours and then break it. He does not need to eat in small quantities like on Yom Kippur but he should not indulge in delicacies, wine and meat unless he has been instructed by a doctor to eat meat. All the other restrictions like bathing and washing and applying creams do apply if not for medical necessity.
- 5.2 On the eve of Tisha B'Ab after midday, 1:07pm, we may only study those portions of the Torah permitted to be studied on Tisha B'Ab i.e. subjects which have to do with the destruction and mourning. Some poskim are lenient since it falls on Shabbat this year.
- 5.3 It is forbidden to wear leather shoes or slippers on Tisha B'Ab.
- 5.4 One should not sit on a chair up to midday of the fast which is 1:07 pm. This applies at home and at the Beth Hamedrash. It does not apply to anyone suffering from a disability or illness. The custom some have of going shopping after midday is a mistake; even strolling and window-shopping is not allowed.
- 5.5 We do not wash our face or dip our hands in water during the fast and even the Netila of the morning is done only up to the joints of the fingers and not the whole hand. But a housewife who has to cook, can soak the food and wash them as usual. If necessary, we can wash off dirt from our hands. We do not put cosmetic creams or oils on our body during the fast.
- 5.6 Husband and wife should keep away from close physical contact during the fast.
- 5.7 We do not greet each other on Tisha B'Ab.
- 5.8 According to Ben Ish Hai, the Talit and Tefillin are put on at home and Shema and Kadash Li are said before coming to the Beth Hamedrash for Shaharit. But many keep the Minhag Ha Mekubalim of Jerusalem and pray Shaharit in the synagogue with Talit and Tefillin which they remove before the Kinot. There are some who only wear Talit and Tefillin for Mincha as mentioned in Maran. Someone who has put on Tefillin at home in the morning could put them on again at Mincha if he so wishes.
- 5.9 An ill man who is permitted to break the fast should say **Nahamu** in the Berchat Hamazon after Z'man Mincha Gadolah. Someone who has to take tablets on Tisha B'Ab should consult the Rabbi.

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5.10 It is meritorious to make the Netila again after the fast since the whole hand was not washed completely in the morning.

We say Berchat Lebana after the fast terminates.

BETH KNESSET SERVICE TIMINGS FOR THE THREE WEEKS

Wednesday 29th July 2020 – Erev Tisha B'Ab

SHAHARIT	7:00 am
MINCHA	7:00 pm
FAST BEGINS	8:52 pm
ARBIT KINOT	9:00 pm

Thursday 30th July 2020 – Tisha B'Ab

SHAHARIT KINOT	8:00 am
MIDDAY	1:07 pm
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY ARBIT	8:15 pm
FAST TERMINATES	9:42 pm

Our Rabbis say that those who mourn for Jerusalem will merit to see her in her happiness which will be very soon. AMEN.

NORMAL SERVICE TIMINGS

Weekday: **Shaharit 7:00 am** Followed by Shiur. (Sunday 8:00 am)
Mincha 7:30 pm Followed by **Arbit** and Shiurim

Shabbat: **Mincha** (Erev Shabbat) **7:15 pm** followed by Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit
Shaharit 8:30 am followed by **Musaf**
Mincha 7:30 pm
Arbit 5 minutes after Shabbat terminates

**THIS EDITION IS DEDEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
MR. LEVY KELATY z"l
WHOSE YAHRSEIT FALLS ON
Monday 17th AUGUST 2020 (27th AV)**