

LAWS OF THE THREE WEEKS & THE NINE DAYS

THE THREE WEEKS – TUESDAY, JULY 11 – TUESDAY, AUGUST 1

1. From the 17th of Tammuz, Tuesday, July 11, until the first day of the month of Av, Monday, July 24, we observe certain restrictions as we begin to mourn for the tragedies of Jewish History.
2. We do not take haircuts during this period. Some men refrain from shaving as well.
3. We do not perform weddings during this period. However, engagements do take place. One may have an engagement party or bridal shower without music.

THE NINE DAYS – BEGINS MONDAY, JULY 24

The arrival of Rosh Chodesh Av brings about a dramatic intensification of restrictions. From the first of Av until midday of the Tenth of Av, we refrain from any kind of joy or celebration. People of Sephardic origin observe these laws starting with Sunday of the week that includes Tisha B'Av.

1. We refrain from cutting hair from the 17th of Tammuz, three weeks before Tisha B'Av. Concerning shaving, there are two customs. Some do not shave from the First of Av while others do not shave for the entire three week period from the 17th of Tammuz.
2. We do not wear new or freshly laundered clothes, even if they were laundered or cleaned prior to the beginning of Av. This law applies to all outer clothing. It does NOT apply to undergarments.
3. Washing of all clothing is forbidden during the nine days, even if they are set aside for use after the nine days.
4. We do not eat meat or drink wine except on Shabbat.
5. We do not drink the wine used for Havdalah. Rather, we give it to a young child mature enough to understand what Havdalah is. It might be more practical to make Havdalah over beer or tea as a substitute for wine. These may be drunk even by an adult.
6. We do not wash ourselves for pleasure during this period. In preparation for Shabbat, we may take a warm shower or bath as usual.
7. Women use the Mikveh during the Nine Days (except on Tisha B'Av) and may take the necessary bath to prepare for it
8. During Shabbat of the Nine Days (Shabbat Chazon), one may invite small groups of friends for meals.

LAWS OF TISHA B'AV- MONDAY NIGHT, JULY 31-TUESDAY, AUGUST 1

With sunset of Erev Tisha B'Av, the fast begins and all of the laws that follow are in effect until nightfall of the Tenth of Av.

WASHING – RACHITZA

1. Washing any part of the body in any manner is forbidden, whether with cold or hot water.
2. Upon rising in the morning, the hands are washed three times alternately until the knuckles. The blessing “al netilas yadayim” is not pronounced until after one uses the bathroom and washes the hands. After partially drying the hands, one may run them superficially over the face, hands and legs.
3. Women do not go to the Mikveh on the night of Tisha B'Av. They should bathe themselves on the afternoon of Erev Tisha B'Av and use the mikveh on the evening following the fast.

SMEARING – SICHA

4. It is forbidden to spread cosmetics, perfumes, ointments, oils, etc. on the body for pleasure. If there is a medicinal need, then it is permitted.

FOOTWEAR – NE'ILAS HASANDAL

5. It is forbidden to wear shoes or other footwear which are made totally or even partially of leather. Shoes or footwear made of any other material may be worn.

MARITAL RELATIONS – TASHMISH HAMITAH

6. Marital relations are forbidden on the Ninth of Av.

EATING AND DRINKING – ACHILA USHESIYAH

7. Eating and drinking are forbidden. A women within 30 days after childbirth may eat but is allowed to fast if she feels well enough. A woman within seven days after childbirth should not fast, and within three days is forbidden to fast. If a person is ill and feels that he must eat, then he may do so. But, if possible a question should be asked of a Rabbi about eating.

GREETINGS

8. We do not greet friends on the Ninth of Av. However, one should be careful not to offend someone who is unaware of this law.

TORAH STUDY

9. Torah study is forbidden except for laws, Biblical passages or Talmudic passages relevant to mourning, Tisha B'Av or sad events. This includes Job, Lamentations, part of Jeremiah, commentaries and Midrashic literature on these books. The third chapter of Tractate Moed Katan contains the laws of mourning. Tractate Gittin 55b-58a contains details of the destruction of both temples.
10. A person should try to avoid working on the Ninth of Av if at all possible. If not, one should limit these activities as much as possible.
11. The Laws of Mourning progress from more intense mourning to less intense mourning with the goal of eventually relaxing the various restrictions they impose. On Tisha B'Av itself, there is a series of laws which are in effect only until midday and are gradually relaxed. When the Temple was destroyed, it was burning by midday on Tisha B'Av and, hence, the punishment was already meted out. Futhermore, our eternal optimism, our hope for redemption, even in the most difficult of times, is expressed through a relaxation of some of the laws on Tisha B'Av itself.

What follows is a list of laws which are in effect from sunset until midday (chatzos – 12:58PM) of the Ninth of Av:

12. Tallis and tefillin are not worn in the morning but are put on with their respective blessings after midday at the Mincha service. Care should be taken to say the blessings only but not the Torah chapters about tefillin which are customarily said before putting them on.
13. We sit on the floor or on a low stool until midday after which we may resume sitting in our accustomed positions. There is a custom for those who are physically able, to try to sleep with one less pillow than usual. This, too, only applies until midday of Tisha B'Av.
14. We do not prepare the evening meal until after midday.
15. There are certain prayers which we omit in the morning but say at Mincha.

TISHA B'AV

Monday Night, July 31

Early Mincha	5:45PM
Second Mincha	8:00PM
Fast Begins	8:10PM
Maariv/ <i>Eicha</i>	8:25PM

Tuesday, August 1

Shacharit/ <i>Kinot</i>	6:30/7:30AM
Chatzot	12:58PM
Early Mincha (<i>Talit & Tefillin</i>)	1:45PM
Second Mincha (<i>Talit & Tefillin</i>)	7:50PM
Maariv	8:30PM
Fast Ends	8:44PM