

The Three Weeks- Laws and Customs:

Rabbi Yosef Loewy

During the period between the seventeenth of *tamuz* and the ninth of *av* the Jewish people observe a period of mourning over the loss of our Temple and the long exile we continue to experience. The Rabbi's enacted certain restrictions during this period to enable us to feel the absence of G-d's direct presence within our midst and to display our sadness and remorse over such a major loss. We are told anyone who properly mourns over Jerusalem will merit to see the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem with incredible happiness and joy. The restrictions intensify as we get further into this period. I have tried to compile the various laws into this easy to read pamphlet. If you have any specific questions, please feel free to call me at any time at 551-223-8528. The detailed Tisha B'av schedule with all the times and programming on Tisha B'av will be sent out in the near future. I pray that this should be the last year we must observe this mourning period and may we all gather together in Jerusalem next year and celebrate with our rebuilt Temple!

Beginning from the seventeenth of Tamuz- **Saturday Night, July 20th** (the fast is pushed off till Sunday):

- ❖ One should avoid haircuts and shaving (if one must shave for business purposes out of fear of loss of money he may do so).
- ❖ One should avoid listening to music.
- ❖ We don't make any weddings or major celebrations.
- ❖ One should avoid the recitation of *shehecheyanu* on both a new garment and new fruit. Therefore, one should avoid buying new garments during this time period.

Beginning on the first of Av- **Thursday Night, August 1st**:

- ❖ One is not allowed to eat meat or drink wine (except on Shabbos and a *seudas mitzvah* (feast in celebration of a mitzvah e.g. *bris, pidyon haben, siyum*).
- ❖ One should not wear freshly laundered clothing (undergarments and socks are not included). **Instead, one should wear any garment he or she will need during the nine days for 30 minutes some time before Thursday night at sunset.**
- ❖ One should not wash themselves for pleasure. Bathing and showering should be limited to cleaning soiled bodies.
- ❖ Major court cases should be avoided during this time period. Since this period is an inauspicious time for Jews it is best to postpone court cases till after the nine days.
- ❖ One should not begin major projects or investments during the nine days. In addition, it's best to avoid a paint job in the house during the nine days.
- ❖ One should not do pleasure swimming during the nine days. If one must swim for exercise or health purposes please speak to me.

Laws of Tisha B'Av- **Saturday night, August 10th – Sunday, August 11th**:

- ❖ The five restrictions that are set for Yom Kippur apply to Tisha B'av as well. They are:
 1. Eating and Drinking
 2. Anointing oneself with any cosmetics or perfumes.
 3. Washing oneself. One should only wash his hands till the knuckles in the morning and after using the bathroom.
 4. Wearing leather shoes
 5. Marital relations
- ❖ In addition, we don't greet each other (with a hello, good morning, how are you, etc.) on Tisha B'av.

From the start of Tisha B'av till midday (**12:58 pm**)

- ❖ One should be thinking about sad things during the first half of the day and not be involved in other activities that distract a person from mourning.
- ❖ One should not sit high on a chair till midday. If one has health problems / back issues, he or she is allowed to sit high.
- ❖ Men do not wear *tallis* or *tefillin* until after midday similar to the day of burial for a close relative.

There are a few special laws that apply specifically for this year since Tisha B'av is pushed off to Sunday.

- ❖ Say the blessing *Baruch Hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol* immediately when Shabbos ends.
- ❖ We say the blessing on the fire of the *havdala* candle after Maariv. Anyone who is present in shul will hear the blessing in shul. We don't say the rest of *havdala*. Instead, we wait till the fast is over and make the blessing on wine and the last blessing of *hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol* at that time. We omit the blessing on the *besamim* (spices) for that week.