

Summary of the Laws of the 3 Weeks, the 9 Days and Tisha B'Av

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Tisha B'Av is the Jewish people's national day of mourning. It marks the loss of our two temples and all the subsequent tragedies that have occurred due to our Exile. The *Halacha* recognizes that there needs to be a process to fully comprehend the scope of what this loss represents. Therefore, we start diminishing our joy with the three weeks, leading to the 9 days, until we reach Tisha B'Av itself when we act as if we are actual *aveilim* (mourners). This sheet is a summary of the major laws and traditions for this sad time in our calendar.

Note: This is just a summary of the major laws. Under certain circumstances there may be exceptions. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 404-782-9703 or rabbi.starr@yith.org.

The restrictions of the 3 weeks- Begins with the Fast of Tammuz (July 1st)

1. Weddings are not scheduled during this time period.
2. We refrain from taking haircuts.
3. We avoid purchasing especially nice items that would require a *Shehechyanu* blessing.
4. We avoid joyous events with live music.

The restrictions of the 9 days- Begins Thursday night, July 12th.

The Talmud teaches us when the month of Av enters our simcha (joy) is lessened.

1. The custom is to not eat meat or drink wine except on Shabbat.
 - Exceptions:
 - A person who is unable to eat milk products may eat chicken.
 - If a nursing woman's milk will be affected by not eating meat she may eat meat.
 - One can eat food cooked in a meat pot.
 - Havdalah should preferably be made on grape juice and not wine.
2. Laundry- We do not do laundry or have it done by a non-Jew for us during this time. We also do not wear freshly laundered clothing.
 - Exceptions:
 - One may wash clothing for young children.
 - It is permissible to wash undergarments.
3. Washing for pleasure- Showering should be done in cooler water than usual for the sake of cleanliness. Therefore, swimming for pleasure is not done during this time period.
4. Shaving- Many have the practice to avoid shaving as a sign of mourning.

The restrictions of Tisha B'Av are:

1. Eating and drinking
 - In principle this applies to pregnant and nursing women as well. However, health is of utmost importance so please contact me if you have a question in this regard.
 - One who is sick and needs to eat or drink is allowed to eat or drink.
2. Washing of body, face and hands
 - Exceptions:
 - One can wash off dirt.
 - After using the bathroom
 - The morning Netilat Yadayim may be done up to the knuckles.
 - One who is particular and will not feel comfortable until they wash their face may wash their face.
3. Anointing
 - Makeup is not used on Tisha B'Av.
4. Marital Relations
5. Wearing leather shoes
6. Torah study- Because the words of the Torah bring us joy.
 - Exceptions: Sections of Torah that deal with the destruction and mourning such as Eicha, Midrash Eicha, Book of Job, the prophecies of destruction in Jeremiah, the last chapter in Talmud Moed Katan, and the section in Talmud Gittin dealing with the destruction.

In addition to these restrictions there are other *Minhagim* (customs) for Tisha B'Av:

1. One's sleep should be a little less comfortable so the custom is to use one less pillow than usual.
2. In shul we sit on the floor or lower than usual until *Chatzot* (1:43pm).
3. We do not greet each other in the normal fashion.
4. Tallit and Tefillin are not worn during Shacharit but rather at Mincha.

The Talmud teaches us: "כל המתאבל על ירושלים, זוכה ורואה בשמחתה"
"Anyone who mourns over Jerusalem will merit seeing it in its joy."
May we merit seeing a rebuilt Jerusalem full of joy and peace.