



TISHA B'AV

Temple Israel Presents “How to Tisha B'av”

A guide for those commemorating Tisha B'av

WHAT IS TISHA B'AV?

Tisha B'av is an annual fast day and day of mourning in Judaism, named for the ninth day (Tisha) of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar. The fast observes the destruction of both the First Temple and Second Temple in Jerusalem, which occurred about 655 years apart, but on the same Hebrew calendar date. It is also believed that other tragedies throughout history befell the Jewish people on this date. It is said that the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 and the beginning of World War I in 1914 coincide with Tisha B'av.

HOW IS TISHA B'AV OBSERVED?

A three-week mourning period preceding Tisha B'av begins on the 17th day of the month Tammuz. The Mishnah (an edited record of the complex body of material known as oral Torah) tells us that 17th Tammuz was the day the Romans succeeded in breaking through the walls of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Traditionally, Jews do not partake in joyous occasions during this time, and weddings are not permitted.

Nine days before Tisha B'av, a more serious time of mourning begins. Traditionally, Jews refrain from cutting their hair or eating meat. Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Jews practice these customs in a variety of ways according to observance level.

During the actual day of Tisha B'av, it is customary to fast (no food or drink), and to refrain from bathing, wearing leather, and using perfumes.

The Scroll of Lamentations (Megillat Eicha) is chanted during the evening service and is a lament for the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem.

Tisha B'av is not observed on Shabbat, so if the 9th of Av falls on a Saturday, the fast is pushed until the next day, the 10th of Av.

HOW CAN I OBSERVE TISHA B'AV?

There are many ways you can observe Jewish holidays in your own way, including Tisha B'av, and the most important thing is to understand the meaning and history of the holiday, and then decide what significance it has in your life.

For Tisha B'av, consider:

- Fasting, fasting only part of the day instead of the whole day, or refraining from eating certain foods or drinks like sweets or alcohol
- Studying the history of the Jewish people and how we've overcome many tragedies and obstacles
- Beginning to prepare for the Jewish New Year – Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – a time to reflect on our actions, ask for forgiveness, and try to be better in the new year

Please feel free to contact Rabbi Amy Feder afeder@ti-stl.org or 314-432-8050 with any questions regarding how you can commemorate Tisha B'av at home.