

The Fast of the 17th of Tammuz, The Three Weeks & The Nine Days

Shiva Asur B'Tammuz (The 17th of Tammuz)

The FAST OF THE 17th OF TAMMUZ, marking (among other things) the fall of Jerusalem to the Roman invaders in 70 CE, is observed this year on Sunday, July 17, 2022.

The fast starts at 5:27AM

The fast ends at 8:52 PM

Pregnant and nursing women, those who are ill, and others whose health would be adversely affected - are exempted from the fast. Those below bar or bas mitzvah also do not fast.

The wearing of leather shoes is permissible, and there are no work restrictions.

THE FIVE TRAGEDIES: Five calamities befell the Jewish people on the 17th of Tammuz

1. The first tablets containing the Ten Commandments were broken by Moshe Rabbeinu as a response to the sin of the golden calf.
2. The Korban Tamid, the two daily sacrifices were suspended during the time of the First Temple.
3. The Romans broke down the walls of Jerusalem which eventually led to the destruction of the Second Temple.
4. The wicked Greek general, Apostumos, burned Sefrei Torah.
5. An idol was placed in the holy temple by king Menashe during the First Temple period.

THE THREE WEEKS

This Saturday night marks the beginning of a time of national mourning known as "The Three Weeks." The Three Weeks extend until the afternoon following the fast of Tisha B'av. The following halachos apply throughout this period:

- WEDDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS: During these three weeks we do not get married. Engagements are permitted, and one may have an engagement party (Vort) with a meal. Music and dancing, though, would be forbidden. Singing is permitted. [During the Nine Days, only cakes and beverages should be served.]
- MUSIC: We do not listen to music, whether live or recorded, for enjoyment during the Three Weeks.
- HAIRCUTS AND SHAVING: We do not get haircuts during the Three Weeks. Men do not shave, unless they need to do so for professional reasons so as to avoid financial loss.

- *SHE'HECHEYANU*: Finally, we attempt to avoid reciting the blessing of *she'hecheyanu*, which would normally be made upon eating a new fruit, purchasing a special item, wearing an expensive new item of clothing, or the like. *She'hecheyanu* may be made on Shabbat. The berachah of *hatov v'hameitiv*, recited over a shared joy (e.g., a new family car), may be recited. [Clothing which require alteration may be purchased, since the berachah of *she'hecheyanu* is not recited until they will be worn. Simple items of clothing, such as new shirts, pants, shoes, etc. may be purchased and worn up until the Nine Days.]

THE NINE DAYS

The last nine days of the Three Weeks, reflect a heightened level of mourning culminating in the fast of Tisha B'av. During these nine days (from the night of July 28th through the end of the fast), aside from the above restrictions, additional restrictions apply in accordance with the Talmudic dictum (*Ta'anit* 26): "When the month of Av begins, we reduce our joy." The additional restrictions of this time period are:

- **MEAT AND WINE**: During the Nine Days we abstain from consuming meat, poultry, wine, or grape juice. However, on Shabbat, or at a "seudat mitzvah" (a mitzvah meal such as a brit milah or siyum), these items may be eaten/drunk. Beer and liquor are permitted. For Havdalah, one may technically drink the wine or grape juice himself. However, many attempt to have a minor who is between the ages of six and ten drink the grape juice instead.
- **LAUNDRY**: We refrain from doing laundry, except for small children, whose clothing become soiled often. We even refrain from wearing freshly laundered outer garments or changing linens or towels during the Nine Days (except for guests). One may wear fresh socks or undergarments. One may wear fresh clothing and change towels for Shabbat. [The "freshness" of a garment can be removed prior to the Nine Days, simply by wearing it briefly – e.g., for five or ten minutes.] In addition, clothing should not be brought to the drycleaners or ironed during the Nine Days.
- **BATHING FOR PLEASURE**: During the Nine Days we do not bathe or swim for pleasure. It is permitted to bathe in order to remove dirt or perspiration. The water may only be lukewarm to the degree necessary to accomplish this. Bathing in the normal fashion is permitted, according to many, on Friday in honor of Shabbat. Also, women may prepare for the mikveh in the normal fashion during the Nine Days.
- **PURCHASES OF SIMCHA**: We avoid purchasing any items that bring great joy, if the item will anyways be available for the same price after the Nine Days. In addition, we generally do not purchase new clothing (even simple items) during the Nine Days. One who lacks Tisha B'av shoes may purchase them.
- **HOME IMPROVEMENTS**: During this period, we suspend initiating home improvements meant to simply beautify and renovate one's home, and we suspend the planting of trees and flowers to beautify one's yard. Building that is necessary to avoid loss or which is necessary for simple dwelling purposes is permitted.

- WEAVING AND SEWING: One should not weave, knit, or sew during the Nine Days. One may repair clothing such as fixing a tear or sewing back on a button.
- Finally, it is advisable to avoid litigation with a non-Jew, when possible, since it is an inauspicious time.
- In a typical year, these restrictions would remain in place until the afternoon following the fast of Tisha B'Av. This year, though, since the observance of Tisha B'av is postponed to Sunday (the 10th of Av), these restrictions all end on the night following the fast, except for the restrictions on meat and wine. [The wine for Havdalah after the fast, though, may be drunk.]

May we merit the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days!