

## Tisha Be'Av 5782

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During the period from the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz until the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, we practice several customs to display mourning for the Beit HaMikdash. Our practices of mourning gradually become more intense until the day of Tisha Be'Av.

*This year, the calendar date of Tisha Be'Av falls out on Shabbat, August 6<sup>th</sup>. Since we cannot fast on Shabbat, the fast is pushed off to Motze Shabbat and Sunday.*

The fast of Tisha Be'Av this year starts Saturday afternoon August 6<sup>th</sup> before **8:05 pm** and ends on Sunday night August 7<sup>th</sup> at **8:35 pm**. (Please note that Shabbat ends at **8:49 pm**. The fast of Tisha Be'av begins at sunset on Shabbat, **before** Shabbat ends.)

### Seudah Hamafseket - Final Meal Before the Fast

Since Tisha Be'Av coincides with Shabbat this year, the usual restrictions of Seuda Hamafseket before Tisha B'Av do not apply. Therefore, one may eat meat and many cooked foods for Seuda Hamfseket this year, and one is not required to sit on a low seat or the floor for this meal. One must finish eating before sunset (8:05) pm.

Havdala with a cup of wine is not recited until after the fast ends Sunday night. After Shabbat ends on Saturday night (8:49 pm), one should say the words "Baruch Hamavdil Ben Kodesh Lechol" and recite only the beracha of Boreh

Me'oreh Ha'esh on a flame. The formal havdala with a cup of wine or grape juice is recited before breaking the fast on Sunday night. Only the beracha of Hagefen and Hamavdil is recited, and not the beracha of Besamim.

### Laws and Customs for the Fast:

The following activities are forbidden for the entire duration of the fast:

- 1. Eating and drinking**
- 2. Application of creams or oils to the skin for pleasure:** When applied for reasons of comfort and pleasure, application of creams is prohibited. When applied for medical reasons it is permitted. Deodorant is also permitted. Many women have the custom not to wear any make-up on Tisha Be'Av, even it was applied before the fast.
- 3. Wearing leather shoes:** Wearing leather shoes is prohibited on Tisha Be'Av. All other leather items, like kippot and belts, are permitted to wear.
- 4. Marital relations:** Couples should not share a bed or engage in affectionate contact on Tisha Be'Av. Even if Mikveh night falls on the night of Tisha Be'Av, it is postponed to the next night (Sunday night).
- 5. Washing:** Taking a shower, bathing, or washing for pleasure is not permitted on the night or day of Tisha Be'Av. Likewise, swimming and going to the pool is prohibited until after Tisha

Be'Av. If a part of one's body is unclean, one may wash that specific body part. It is permitted to use baby wipes to clean oneself, as this is not considered washing.

For Netilat Yadayim in the morning, we wash only up to the fingertips. Brushing teeth and washing one's mouth should also be avoided unless one has exceptional distress from it.

**Work on Tisha Be'Av:** It is preferable not to work on Tisha Be'Av, because it would divert one's attention from the grief of the day. If one must work, he should try to work only after midday (1:00 pm).

**Laundry and Wearing Freshly Laundered Clothes:** Laundry is prohibited until after the fast. Even doing laundry for the clothes to be ready after the fast is prohibited. Similarly, one may not take clothes to dry cleaning on this day. We also refrain from wearing freshly laundered clothing (except undergarments) until after the fast.

**Haircuts and Shaving:** It is prohibited to get a haircut or shave until after the fast.

**Torah Study:** On Tisha Be'Av we refrain from studying Torah, because studying Torah is a joyous activity. One may only study Torah subjects that pertain to Tisha Be'Av or contain sad content, such as the Book of Eicha, the Book of Iyov, most of the Book of Yirmiyahu, or passages of the Talmud or halachic works that are related to the fast or related to mourning.

**Tallit & Tefillin:** Tefillin is a badge of honor and pride for our people. Therefore, we do not wear Tallit and Tefillin for Shacharit in the morning on Tisha Be'Av. The custom of our community is to wear tefillin in the afternoon at Mincha instead.

**Sitting on the floor:** During Arvit and Shacharit in the morning, we sit on the floor during the prayers at synagogue, particularly during the recitation of Echa (Lamentations) and Kinot. The elderly or those who have extra difficulty sitting on the ground may sit on chairs.

**Greetings:** Since the mood of the day is one of collective mourning, greeting and socializing in the normal manner is not permitted on Tisha Be'Av. If someone does greet us, we should respond in an appropriate but solemn way.

**Visiting the Cemetery:** The Mashadi custom is to go the cemetery to visit the graves of one's deceased relatives on the day of Tisha Be'av.

## Why do we fast on Tisha Be'Av?

This fast is one of four fasts instituted by our Sages to commemorate the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash and the events surrounding it. Five tragedies happened to the Jewish people on Tisha Be'Av:

1. **Chet Hameragelim (ca. 1300 BCE):** The Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the 10 spies that came back with negative

reports from Israel. Hashem decreed that all those 20 years of age and older would not enter Israel.

2. **Churban Habayit Harishon (586 BCE):** The destruction of the First Bet Hamikdash

3. **Churban Habayit Hasheni (68 CE):** The destruction of the Second Bet Hamikdash

4. **Nilkeda Beitar (135 CE):** The Bar Kochva revolt was crushed by the Romans. The City of Beitar was captured by the enemy and over 100,000 Jews were killed.

5. **Necherash HaHechal:** The Hechal, one of the holiest areas of the Bet Hamikdash, was plowed down by the Romans and Jerusalem was turned into a pagan city.

## Exemptions From the Fast

### Reciting Havdala Before Breaking the Fast:

One who is exempt from fasting (see below) should recite Havdala with wine or grape juice before they break the fast. They only recite the two berachot Hagefen and Hamavdil, and do not say Besamim.

**Pregnant and Nursing:** Most years, pregnant and nursing women who are healthy are required to fast on Tisha Be'Av. However, this year, since the fast is pushed off to Sunday (*Nidheh*), pregnant and nursing women are exempt from the fast. If they feel healthy and able, they should try to participate somewhat in the fast until the morning or midday. Even upon breaking the fast,

they should not eat excessively for pleasure, but only to sustain themselves as required.

A woman who has given birth within thirty days is entirely exempt from the fast of Tisha Be'Av. Although she may eat, she should not eat excessively for pleasure, but only to sustain herself as required.

**Illness:** One who has a chronic illness such as diabetes should not observe the fast. If it will not cause harm, one with such an illness should try to fast until the morning or until midday. If one develops a high fever or becomes very ill during the fast (severe dizziness, vomiting), one must break the fast. Upon breaking the fast, one should eat or drink as necessary, but not for pleasure or in excess.

**Children:** Children should not fast on Tisha Be'Av until they have reached the age of Bar/Bat Mitzva. It is customary for children not to wear leather shoes during the fast. Children may eat, drink, and wash normally on Tisha Be'Av.

Our Sages tell us that all who mourn Yerushalayim will merit to see its happiness. May we all merit to see the full joy of the rebuilding of our Bet HaMikdash, speedily in our days.