

Review: Shabbat Chazon & Tish'a b'Av

This review is an educational tool; actual halachic questions should be put to a Rav. This is especially true of circumstances that are out of the ordinary.

The Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av is known as SHABBAT CHAZON. The name derives from the Haftara which is read, the first chapter of Yeshayahu.

Cleaning the house and other preparations for Shabbat are as usual.

Although we do not eat meat during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat), one may taste (without swallowing) food being cooked for Shabbat to determine its flavor-needs.

Many authorities permit bathing and dressing for Shabbat as one would usually do for any other Shabbat. (This is standard practice in Israel.) Others impose some restrictions, such as washing with less pleasant water (temperature-wise), and not bathing the entire body at one time.

One may cut his/her fingernails during the first part of the 9 Days, but not during the week in which the 9Av falls.

One may wear fresh garments for Shabbat, but not new ones. Some say that they should be put on only right before Shabbat.

Many shuls sing L'cha Dodi to the tune of "Eli Tzion" from Tish'a b'Av morning kinot. Some frown upon this custom as a public display of mourning on Shabbat. Nonetheless, it is a common custom.

It is okay to drink wine and eat meat once a person has taken Shabbat, even if it is before sunset.

Many shuls read the pasuk beginning with the word "Eicha" (D'varim 1:12) to the tune of Eicha.

The Haftara for Shabbat Chazon is mostly read with the Eicha melody. The rabbi of the shul or a prominent member of the congregation is usually given Maftir.

Shabbat meals are as usual, including meat and wine. The custom of not eating meat or drinking wine during the Nine Days does not apply to Shabbat - part of "no public display of mourning on Shabbat". One may have meat and wine at all meals on Shabbat, even if this is more than he would usually do. If one is eating meat at the Third Meal, and the meal extends into the night, he still may continue to eat meat. Some disagree and hold that one should stop eating meat at nightfall, even if one hasn't ended his Shabbat.

It will serve us well to think of meat & wine on Shabbat Chazon, not only in the negative (no public display of mourning, therefore...), but also in a positive way. Shabbat is called "a foretaste of the World to Come". Shabbat Chazon allows us a glimpse into the (hopefully near) future when the prophecy of Zacharia will come to be and Tish'a b'Av and its three satellite fasts will become joyous days. We might look at Shabbat as a down payment from G-d, so to speak, on His promise for the future.

Havdala: Some say that since Havdala of Shabbat Chazon is said after Shabbat is over, then one should not drink wine, since wine is forbidden during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat). One would then choose a beverage for Havdala that is known as CHAMAR MEDINA, a drink of some importance in our society. Check with your LOR for the approved drinks list.

The other opinion holds that THE proper beverage for Havdala is WINE (except in cases of "great need", such as, there is no wine or you are allergic to it). If you use wine and there is a child present at Havdala who is old enough to understand the concept of Brachot but too young to understand Mourning the CHURBAN, then he/she should drink the wine of Havdala. (Too young and no real understanding of brachot does not absolve the Havdala maker from drinking. Old enough to mourn the loss of the Mikdash, then he/she also shouldn't be drinking wine during the Nine Days.) If not, the one saying Havdala should drink the wine. Some say that he should not finish the whole cup, but suffice with a ROV R'VI'IT. Others say to drink the whole cup so that the after-bracha can be said.

SHAVUA SHECHAL BO

The week in which Tish'a b'Av falls has stricter rules than the first part of the Nine Days - e.g. those who shave during the Three Weeks and even after Rosh Chodesh Av, should at least not shave during SHAVU'A SHECHAL BO. As mentioned earlier, cutting one's nails is not permitted. Psychologically, one should be "aware" of the increase in mournful practice and feelings.

EREV TISH'A B'AV

Some authorities forbid regular Torah learning in the afternoon of Erev 9Av, permitting only those topics which are permitted on Tish'a b'Av itself.

There is a strict opinion that one should not eat regular meals after noon - only SEUDA HAMAFSEKET. Realistically, this opinion is too difficult to follow, and, in fact, is not followed. The usual practice is to eat a regular meal in the late afternoon, followed by Mincha (if that works out), and then to have the special pre-fast "meal", shortly before the onset of the fast.

SEUDA HAMAFSEKET traditionally consists of bread (or pita) and a hard boiled egg, and water. Some dip the egg and/or bread in ash.

Officially, there are many rules concerning what may and may not be eaten at this pre-fast meal. Since most people will have recently eaten a "regular" supper, it is most common to have SEUDA HAMAFSEKET with just bread, egg, and water.

This is a mourner's meal, appropriate for pre-9Av. It should be eaten alone, to avoid benching mezuman. Some sit on the floor or low seat for this meal. The meal is eaten and the Birkat HaMazon is said with a heavy heart, realizing the enormity of the Churban. (Recommended to say AL NAHAROT BAVEL before Birkat HaMazon, even if you don't do so on other non-Shir HaMaalot days.)

As is true throughout 9Av, it is very important that one's thoughts be on the mournful and serious nature of the day.

LEIL TISH'A B'AV

The prohibitions of Tish'a b'Av should begin a few minutes before sunset. For Jerusalem this year, we should stop eating, etc. a few minutes before 7:44pm. (This is the earlier sunset time than the one that takes Jerusalem's elevation into account. One should finish eating and drinking by 7:40ish.)

Maariv is recited in a low, mournful tone. Then **Megilat Eicha** is read while people sit on the ground or on low stools. It is customary to reduce the lighting in shul and remove the curtain of the Ark and the covers of the Amud and Shulchan.

When Eicha is read from parchment, as it is in many shuls in Jerusalem, the bracha AL MIKRA MEGILA is recited (but not She'he'che'yanu).

Following Eicha some kinot (poems of lament) are chanted.

3 aspects of 9Av laws...

[1] The prohibitions of Yom Kippur-like fasts viz. (a) no eating or drinking, (b) no washing except for fingertips for ritual washing and the washing of actual dirtied areas of the body, (c) no cosmetics or lotions (medications and unscented deodorant are permitted), (d) no wearing of leather shoes, including shoes or sneakers with tops or soles of leather, (e) no marital relations;

[2] practices related to mourning, such as no Torah-learning (except for sad themes such as the books of Eicha and Iyov, certain parts of other books of Tanach, the laws of Tish'a b'Av, the laws of mourning, etc.; no exchange of social

greetings (mazal tov is permitted, however), sitting on the ground; and

[3] a reduction of luxuries and comfort, such as making sleeping conditions less comfortable.

Tish'a b'Av day

In the morning, one should wash only the fingers (and eyes, with one's wet fingertips).

Shacharit: Talit & T'filin are not worn. No Birkat Kohanim. Davening is regular but subdued. We omit the bracha OTER YISRAEL B'TIF'ARA, as this is considered a reference to T'filin, the crown of glory of the Jew. The bracha will be said at Mincha when one does put on T'filin. [GR''A's minhag is also to skip SHE'ASA LI KOL TZORKI in the morning brachot, which alludes to having good shoes. This bracha is said after the fast, when one puts on leather shoes.]

On the other hand, it is surprising that we don't say Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun, Lamnatzei'ach, or Slichot, any and all of which we might expect on a fast day. Tish'a b'Av, however, is referred to as a MO'ED and will IY"H be a festival when the Beit HaMikdash is rebuilt. As a sign of our complete confidence in this promise of the Messianic times, we treat Tish'a b'Av now as a festival in these token ways.

Special 9Av Torah reading (from Va'etchanan) and Haftara (from Yirmiyahu, read with the Eicha tune) are followed by Kinot which should ideally continue until halachic noon (approx. 12:45pm). Some read Eicha in the morning, too.

Thinking about Churban Beit HaMikdash (and other tragedies associated with 9Av) is essential.

Therefore, one should refrain from that which would cause the mind to wander from the day's thoughts.

AFTER NOON: Although **most restrictions continue throughout the entire day**, a few are relaxed at mincha-time. The Parochet is returned to the Ark, lighting in shul is restored, talit and t'filin are worn, Kohanim bless the People, and sitting on regular chairs is permitted. This, in essence, almost transforms Tish'a b'Av into a "regular" fast day and psychologically allows us to reflect on the consolation of the prophecies of the Geula and the Building of the Third Beit HaMikdash.

Torah and Haftara readings for Mincha are like other fast-days. The passages of **NACHEIM** and **ANEINU** are inserted into the Jerusalem bracha and Sh'ma Koleinu respectively. Omitting either, one does not go back. However, Nacheim can be said within R'TZEL and either or both can be said before YIHYU L'RATZON.

Motza'ei Tish'a b'Av

The fast ends approx. 8:20pm (some say 8:15). Maariv is regular. One should try to wash his hands ritually (if possible, for Maariv; if not, then right afterwards), since it had not been "properly" done in the morning.

Some say Kiddush L'vana right after Tish'a b'Av (preferably after breaking the fast - bring crackers, a fruit, or whatever with you to Maariv). Others will have said K.L. during the previous week

(based on Minhag Yerushalayim). Others will wait for Motza'ei Shabbat Nachamu.

The 10th of Av is the day that most of the Beit HaMikdash burned. Because it started burning on the 9th, and because of other events associated with the 9th, Chazal fixed the fast day on the 9th. But the restrictions of the 9 Days continue beyond the fast. Restrictions apply until halachic noon of the 10th of Av (12:46pm this year). This applies to not eating meat and drinking wine, listening to joyous music, bathing, laundry, etc. Marital relations are forbidden on the eve of the 10th of Av, unless it is the "mikve" night. There are other circumstances that would permit relations - ask a Rav.

PONDER THIS...

Several events in Jewish history are associated with 9Av that are not mentioned in the Mishna in Taanit. Major expulsions of Jews from different countries began on 9Av, or were decreed on 9Av, or are in some way linked to 9Av. Some massacres are associated with 9Av. We must view them in an appropriate perspective. Simply put, the troubles we have suffered throughout the many centuries of exile are directly related to the exile itself and the causes of it. Pogroms, Crusades, the Holocaust, all spanned the calendar from one end to the other. Yet these events still have a 9Av context. It is therefore appropriate to include in one's thoughts of the day - and activities, such as reading, videos, etc. Holocaust material.

May we merit the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash במהרה בימינו, אמן