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DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

Laws & Customs Bein Hametzarim

9 Tammuz - 11 Menachem Av 5783

Year of Hakhel

Plus a collection of Chassidic insights
& excerpts from the Rebbe's talks

FROM THE BADATZ
OF CROWN HEIGHTS



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Member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

B"H

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By

Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

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FOREWORD

Presented here is comprehensive guidance for the laws & customs of *Bein Hametzarim*, starting with 12-13 Tammuz, and covering the Three Weeks, 17th of Tammuz, Nine Days, *Shabbos Chazon*, 5 Av, *Tishah B'av*, *Shabbos Nachamu*, and general practices regarding the *Churban*.

This includes Chassidic insights & excerpts from the Rebbe's talks.

The details are derived from multiple sources, revised by **Rabbi M.M. Rotenberg**.

Due to a dearth of space, only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos*, and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively.

Please note: Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

* * *

TIME TO PREPARE

In a *sichah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5752, the Rebbe states:

"We need to focus on studying the laws that apply to this time of year, during which many changes are made to the standard prayers and there are numerous customs that apply. We should make certain to study these laws in the Code of Jewish Law.

"Recently, yearly calendars have begun to include many of the laws that apply to the relevant time of the year and that are necessary to know. This is particularly useful for those who, for whatever reason, do not have sefarim or do not know how to find what they are looking for in the sefarim that they own. Now, however, they can simply examine such calendars and easily find the relevant laws.

"It is therefore extremely appropriate for every single person to peruse the contents of these calendars, such as the Kollel Chabad calendar (available both in wall size and pocket size formats) in such a manner that the laws that apply to this time of year will become fixed in his memory. After all, it sometimes happens that a halachic question arises precisely at a point during which it is forbidden to interrupt and ask for someone's guidance—or when there is nobody around to ask. Furthermore [not having familiarized himself with the relevant laws beforehand], it can happen that one does not even realize that there is a problem to begin with."

* * *

YEAR OF HAKHEL

WHAT IS HAKHEL?

Once every seven years, on the second day of Sukkos that immediately follows the conclusion of a Shemitah year, the entire nation—men, women, and children—

gather at the *Beis Hamikdash* and hear the king read aloud from the Torah. This incredible setting is compared to the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and inspires all present with commitment, love, and awe of Hashem. This mitzvah is known as Hakhel, “assembly” of the Jewish nation. Moshiach himself will read from the Torah in the third Beis Hamikdash each Hakhel year—may we merit his coming immediately!

THE REBBE ON HAKHEL

The Rebbe calls attention to the concept of Hakhel to an extraordinary degree and with increasing intensity, to the point that his *sichos* and letters are filled with Hakhel-related directives. Hakhel is not limited to Sukkos. It remains a timely and urgent concept throughout a Hakhel year. We are expected to raise awareness of Hakhel at every possible opportunity and in every possible way, to draw associations between all our activities and the “call of the hour”—Hakhel. Leading by example, the Rebbe went to unusual lengths to draw such associations in his many *sichos*.

During Simchas Torah 5748, the Rebbe called for a Hakhel, assembly, of literature on Hakhel, meaning that information from all relevant Torah sources on the concept of Hakhel should be published in a single volume. It was to include teachings from *Nigleh* and especially from the inner dimensions of Torah, primarily as those teachings are explained in Chassidus. The goal of the volume would be identical to the goal of an actual Hakhel experience: to inspire the people to greater fear and awe of Hashem.

On Shabbos Mishpatim 5741, the Rebbe called for studying the “laws of Hakhel.” It is an obligation to study the laws of each festival every year thirty days in advance of the actual festival. We should similarly study the spiritual laws of Hakhel as they are recorded in the Torah teachings of Mussar, Chassidus, and Kabbalah.

It is not the purpose of this publication, nor is it within its scope, to record all the relevant information on Hakhel, but we have made an effort to include snippets of relevant material wherever appropriate, culled from *sichos* that the Rebbe delivered at farbrengens in 770—or, to borrow a phrase from the laws of Hakhel, that “the king would read ... on a wooden platform in the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*.” This is no substitute for the need to study the topic from the original sources. The Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters on the matter are incredibly extensive.¹

* * *

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice.

This year, a Hakhel year, bears a special connection to Moshiach. The Navi Yirmiyahu foretells that at the time of the Final Redemption, “A great gathering

1) For more on Hakhel, see *Kovetz Hakhel* published by Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos in 5755; *Kahal Gadol* (*Otzeros Mitzvas Hakhel*), republished this year by Mamash; *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, entry “Hakhel”; *Hakhel* (*Kovetz leMitzvas Hakhel u’Birurei Hilchoseha*), authored by Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim in Yerushalayim, published in 5706 and 5733; *Sefer Hakhel* (*Mitzvas Hakhel – Asufas maamarim*), published by Machon Hatorah Veha’aretz in 5761.

(*kahal*, akin to *hakhel*) will return here.” Hakhel is an event led by the Jewish king—a scion of *Beis Dovid*, and therefore, at our Hakhels of the Future, Melech Hamoshiach himself will preside and read from the Torah to inspire the entire, rehabilitated Jewish Nation, speedily in our days.²

LAWS OF REDEMPTION

The concept of studying these halachos is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below:

TO REALIZE REDEMPTION

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately stated, “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote the Rambam] ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the Beis Hamikdash ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the mitzvos that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time—literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy] ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’”³

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded. “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, ‘We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!’ An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.”⁴

* * *

2) Many *sichos* discuss this connection more broadly and deeply. Some of them will be mentioned later in the booklet.

3) *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, p. 341 - Emphasis in original

4) from a *sichah* addressed to N'shei Ubnos Chabad - Sefer Hasichos 5750, vol. 2, p. 485

General Note: The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., at the close of Shabbos).

WEDNESDAY, 9 TAMMUZ

At the time of the *churban* of the first *Beis Hamikdash*, this was the day that the wall of Yerushalayim was breached. However, since in the days of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the breach occurred on the 17th of the month, and its lasting impact was many times more devastating, we commemorate the latter date—our Chachamim establishing that fasting on both these days would be too arduous for most people.

FRIDAY, 11 TAMMUZ, EREV SHABBOS

It is the tradition of a select few to fast on this day, the Friday of Parshas Chukas, as it is the anniversary of the calamity that befell European Jewry in the 13th century with the burning of twenty wagonfuls of holy *sefarim*. In the aftermath, it became known to the *Rabbonim*⁵ that this occurred in connection with the opening words of the *parshah*, *Zos chukas hatorah* (“this is the decree of the Torah”, which can also be read as “**concerning** the Torah”). This date is therefore commemorated on the day of the week it occurred, as opposed to a set calendar date.

Another tragedy connected with this fast that occurred on this day in the first year of *Gezeiras Tach V'tat* (1648-89), as recorded in the *Selichos* composed by Rabbi Shabse Cohen (the *Shach*, of the famous eponymous commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch*), was the destruction of two entire Jewish communities in pogroms initiated by the Cossacks.

SHNAYIM MIKRA

Although we hear the Torah being read in shul each Shabbos, an individual is nevertheless obligated to read each week's *parshah* for himself on a weekly basis, in the format of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*—reading each *posuk* twice and then its Aramaic translation in *Targum Onkelos* once. It is best practice to complete this reading on *erev Shabbos* after *chatzos* (halachic midday); to fulfill this obligation, however, it is still good to read it anytime during Shabbos morning before eating the day meal, though it is better if completed before Shacharis. Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshios Chukas and Balak*. It is our *minhag* with regard to all double *parshios* to include both *Haftoros* in this recitation.

⁵ The process in which this information became known to them is a *shaalas chalom*, a practice in which holy people write a query before going to sleep and the Heavenly answer “comes” to them in a dreamstate.

Candle lighting is at **8:12 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

SHABBOS PARSHAS CHUKAS-BALAK, 12 TAMMUZ

Chag Hageulah

Today we celebrate the birthday of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak in 5640 (1880). Also, on this day in 5687 (1927), he received the good tidings that he was freed from the exile imposed upon him after his arrest and imprisonment for his efforts in strengthening Torah and Judaism.

BLESSING, FARBRENGING, LEARNING

In 5748 (1988), the Rebbe announced: "The twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz need to be in tune with the principle of 'we open with blessing', so '*Gut Yom Tov!*' It is a mitzvah to wish a good Yom Tov to every Jewish person, even to a one who 'merely bears the title 'Jew'⁶—to him and to his family!"

"During the forthcoming two days of liberation," the Frierdiker Rebbe states in a letter, "which are the twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz, Chassidim are to *farbrenge* for material and spiritual good and blessing in the spirit of the custom instituted by our first father, the Alter Rebbe (to *farbenge* on special occasions). During this *farbrenge* Chassidim should talk to one another in a spirit of brotherhood about strengthening fixed times for Torah study. I send them my blessing that G-d favor them in body and spirit."

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe directed us to learn the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamar* entitled *Asarah Sheyoshvim Ve'oskim Batorah*—"Ten who sit and engage in Torah". Its publication for the first celebration of the twelfth of Tammuz constituted an everlasting instruction to study it on each subsequent *Chag Hageulah*; men, women and children should study it.

It is clear from the content of the Previous Rebbe's discourse and letter that his desire is for the discourse to be studied publicly—in a manner of "**Ten** who sit ..." When lacking an alternative, the discourse should be studied even if there are less than ten at the session—and even by an individual. It is clear, however, that all effort should initially be extended to facilitate the study with a session of (at least) ten people.⁷

FIRST PRINTING

On the 12th of Tammuz, 5676 (1816), the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch was set for print for the very first time.

6) This phrase refers to an identical description in a famous letter the Frierdiker Rebbe disseminated in honor of his release concerning who is a potential celebrant on this occasion.

7) See *Sichas Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz* 5748, *Hisvaadyos*, p. 13. Also, *Shabbos Parshas Chukas* 5750, *Hisvaadyos*, p. 409. This *maamar* was reprinted and personally distributed by the Rebbe in honor of 12 Tammuz, 5750.

TEFILLOS

In the last stanza of *Lecha Dodi*, the words *gam berinah* are replaced by *gam besimchah*, as on every Yom Tov.

We do not say *Av Harachamim* or *Tzidkoscha*.

Pirkei Avos: In the tradition of extending the recital of the *perek* every Shabbos throughout the summer months, this week the fifth chapter of Avos is recited.⁸

Shabbos ends at **9:21pm**.

SUNDAY, 13 TAMMUZ

Chag Haegulah

On this day in 5687 (1927) the Frierdiker Rebbe was actually released to return home.

We do not say *Tachanun* today.

From a letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe to mark the festival of his liberation: “I send you a *maamar* ...which is my participation—for their success—with my beloved friends the Chassidim wherever they reside, (which is my way of) being united with you in your *farbrengen* for the purpose of strengthening the practices of Chassidus, in fixing and observing periods for studying Chassidus and to be inspired to pragmatically implement those studies..

“May our G-d and G-d of our Fathers bless the whole community of Chassidim—them, their households, their children and grandchildren among all our brothers the people of Israel (G-d grant them eternal life) with all good things from the soul to those of the flesh.”

TUESDAY, 15 TAMMUZ

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s imprisonment began at 2:45 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 Sivan, 5687 (June 15, 1927) for his “crimes” of spreading Torah Judaism under the Communist regime. On 3 Tammuz, the first breakthrough occurred, when his death sentence was commuted to three years of exile. On 12 Tammuz, in exile in the town of Kostroma, he was informed that he would be released to return home. He remained until one half-hour past mid-day, Wednesday, 13 Tammuz. Two days later, on 15 Tammuz, he arrived back home in Leningrad, the last leg in his journey to redemption.

TODAY’S SPECIALTY

“Today (15 Tammuz),” the Rebbe says,⁹ “is connected with the joyfulness of the

8) The Shavuot Day-to-Day Guide of Badatz discusses avoiding the mention of Hashem’s name in the incomplete Torah verses mentioned in *Pirkei Avos*. This week, it applies in Mishnah 18. We read, “*Tzidkas Hashem...*”

9) *Roshei Devarim of Sichas Tes-Vov Tammuz*, 5736

(Frieddiker) Rebbe's release (upon arriving home after his final arrest)—and its power shows itself in the full moon of this 'month of geulah'. This day has the greatest ability, from any other day this month, to affect the "fullness" and perfection of all the rest of its days, that they too should be transformed to "days of happiness and joy".

Today also commemorates the yahrtzeit of the *Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh*.¹⁰

WEDNESDAY, 16 TAMMUZ

ANTIDOTAL JOY

"Today," the Rebbe said in 5745,¹¹ "before the Three Weeks begin, we need to preempt the negative aspects related to this time period with the appropriate antidote. This demands that in the upcoming days—all twenty-one of them—special efforts should be made to increase Torah learning and giving *tzedakah* (the latter on weekdays, of course). Since the achievement of every spiritual act (in learning and mitzvah performance) is improved when it involves ten Jews or more, we should try, in every way possible, that these resolutions should be of a communal nature—learning in groups of ten or more, giving *tzedakah* in collaboration, and also throughout these days putting greater effort in strengthening the aspect of *tefillah* (especially with a *minyan*). And in all these three mainstays should carry an infusion of *simchah* (even *tefillah*, together with the aspect of introspection needed as a preparation for davening), for 'you should serve Hashem with joy'."

THE THREE WEEKS

Bein Hametzarim

Bein Hametzarim, which means "between the straits", is the time between the 17th of Tammuz, when the calamities associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* began, and the 9th of Av, when the *churban* culminated. It is a period of mourning for the Jewish people, one that should affect each of us personally and painfully even today, 1955 years later, as the adage admonishes, "Any generation that doesn't effectuate the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is considered as if it was destroyed in their time."¹²

KER A VELT TODAY!

On the subject of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe says¹³: According to the Rogachover, the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **continuous**. This doesn't simply mean that

¹⁰) The *Ohr Hachayim's* relationship with the *Baal Shem Tov* (and their connection to *Moshiach*) is discussed in various sources. See Hebrew section for these, and also for references for the addition of "*Hakadosh*" to his title.

¹¹) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, pp. 280 ff

¹²) Talmud Yerushalmi Yuma 1,1

¹³) From a *sichah* of 12 Tammuz, 5744

the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed about two thousand years ago and from then on we are righteously mourning, and when it comes to *Tishah B'Av* and the Three Weeks we pray for its rebuilding, similar to how we when *daven* every day and say *V'sechezna eineinu* for the *geulah* after more than nineteen hundred years in *golus*.

“No!” says the Rogatchover. The continual destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **every single day**. When we recognize this we also realize how we need to cry out every single day, “*Ad Mosai!*” The Rogatchover declares that this is explicitly stated in Talmud Yerushalmi. It is written there: “Anyone who **doesn't effectuate the rebuilding** of the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time” is “as if the *Beis Hamikdash* **was destroyed** in his time!”

More than nineteen hundred years have passed. Being as it is Thursday, *Parshas Pinchas*¹⁴ and it is already after Maariv, and the *Beis Hamikdash* still hasn't been built, we need to know that we must cry out for the *geulah* **as if it was destroyed on Thursday of Parshas Pinchas!** ...And being as *Yidden* have already cried out yesterday, “*Ad Mosai!*”, and the previous day cried out, “*Ad Mosai!*”, and **all the days before that** cried out, “*Ad Mosai!*”—then, *rachmana litzlan*, the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, this afternoon or tonight! **And from this we understand how we have to cry out “Ad Mosai” right now!**

This is not some canny interpretation, but a halachah in Torah, as it says in Torah (itself), “Anyone who didn't build the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time” it is as if “such and such”.

Imagine! The *Beis Hamikdash* is being burned, and nearby stands a *Yid* who is **hardened**, a *Yid* of stone, with a “heart of stone”, and he sees how the *Beis Hamikdash* is being destroyed in his days— (even) this *Yid* would most certainly turn over the world (to prevent the destruction)! The Torah of truth and the Torah of life teaches us a lesson in life: [Here the Rebbe cried out, loudly] Turn the world over today!

DON'T DESPAIR!

“Around the time of the Three Weeks,” it says in *Likkutei Sichos*,¹⁵ “A *Yid* can begin to think about the strength of the darkness of *golus* in general and, more specifically, how dark it is (right now) during the birthpangs of Moshiach. This can lead him, *rachmana litzlan*, to fall into a state of despair, not knowing how he can get through all the hardships. He does know that it is the torment and tribulations during *golus* that will **then** result in the *geulah* being even more elevated; but **now** he finds himself in such a dark and bitter *golus*—how can he now overcome all the difficulties?

“The lesson to educate and uplift us is that, on the contrary, particularly in **this** generation, in the generation of the birthpangs of Moshiach, the inner (hidden) aspect of Torah has been revealed to us. It uncovers and extols the inner meaning of these days: that these days have in them the full strength of the love of Hashem to the *Yidden*.”

¹⁴) the day of this *sichah*

¹⁵) vol. 18, p. 316

“To preface these days, we have the *Chag Hageulah* of twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz, which shows how we can bring out this inner, higher level into revelation **during** the time of *golus* itself (in a way that the concealment will be annulled even on a surface level). This encourages and strengthens *Yidden* to focus their energy during these days on the inner aspect of *golus*, and then, ever more so, will we avoid being affected by the bitterness and lowliness of it.

“Though we must keep all of the laws of mourning of the Three Weeks, as is required by the *Shulchan Aruch* in all of their detail, we find ways **in the spirit of Torah** to act with happiness even during these days. For example, make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* that will transform the day into a ‘*yom tov of Rabanan*’ also during **these** days of the Nine Days! (We can do this to the point that we can even eat a *seudah* of meat when we make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* during the Nine Days.) Or, more generally, we can focus our energy on learning Torah (which gladdens the heart), with an emphasis on the learning of the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* (about building the *Beis Hamikdash* and the like). Through learning Torah on the subjects of how the *Beis Hamikdash* looked, ‘I consider it as if they were involved in the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*’.

ANTICIPATION

“Conducting ourselves in this manner of revealing the inner meaning of the Three Weeks in the same way that it will be when *Moshiach* comes, then, these days will be transformed ‘into rejoicing and happiness, and *yomim tovim*.’”

Concerning the time period of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Rebbe says¹⁶: On the one hand, this is a time during which we have the obligation to “mourn over *Yerushalayim*.” On the other hand, it is specifically this time that demands of us to have a special strength to avoid falling into a state of despair from *golus*, *chas v’shalom*. For we know (that we will ultimately return), as the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Maasei* ends, “Will you not from this time call me, “My Father, You, the Master of my youth?”

Even better: encourage yourself, and other *Yidden*, during the multiplied darkness of the birthpangs of *Moshiach*, and all the more during the Three Weeks, through strengthening the aspect of “I await for him that he will come every day.” (How will he come?) Learn and occupy yourself with studying the “formation of the *Beis Hamikdash* and all of its *halachos*.”

HAPPY?

During the time of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe encourages,¹⁷ “we should increase in all areas of Torah and *mitzvos* with a *shturem* (extra enthusiasm), especially in the area of *simchah*. Certainly, the intention isn’t an artificial joy, where one pinches his cheek so that people should think he’s happy or, even more heartily, does some movement like clapping his hands. The intention is to reach a true happiness that permeates the emotions of the heart. For this reason, we should

16) *Ibid.*, p. 411

17) *Roshei Devarim* from *Shabbos Parshas Maasei* 5744

exert effort to utilize every opportunity to organize *farbrengens* during the Three Weeks. This will lead to happiness not only amongst the participants, but also to happiness Above, since through increasing in joy, we minimize and nullify all of the undesirable aspects of the Three Weeks, to the point that it leads to effect *nechamah* (comfort), a double *nechamah* in our physical reality.”

ADVANTAGEOUS

In Or HaTorah¹⁸: There is a parable of a king who, when traveling, is more easily reachable to converse with than when he is at home. This accessibility is not limited to those who are worthy. In the same way, as is explained by the *Avodas Yisroel*¹⁹ in the name of the Maggid, all who pursue a revelation of G-dliness, will reach it *davka* during the Three Weeks, as in the above parable.

In several *sichos* (too many to enumerate here), the advantage of the days of the Three Weeks is explained. Despite the fact that on a surface level these days appear to be of sieges and calamities and a time of decreased happiness to the point that we even have laws of mourning, it is clear that we should not spend this time focused on bitterness and depressive subjects, *chas v'shalom*.

On the contrary, the whole point of this descent is in order for there to be an ascent, and when we experience an incomparable descent, the ascent will be so as well. Even more than that, the inner essence and truth of these days themselves is an elevated goodness; being hidden good it is rooted in a higher level than revealed good.

Additionally, when you look at reality through the lens of the Torah, and not the way reality is perceived in this world below, you see only pure goodness. Through our Divine service of the Three Weeks (*Bein Hametzarim*), that is “from the *meitzar* (strait) I call out”—from the constraints of *golus* we are able to “draw down from above the ‘higher strait’ (which is a place) that no mind can grasp,” as is brought in *Chassidus* concerning this time period.

STRAIT TO FREEDOM

When Moshiach comes the good will be revealed below in a tangible way, within the reality of this world. This revelation will be like the advantage of light that comes after darkness. And after the *meitzar*, as the *passuk* continues, “Hashem answers me with *merchav* (latitude)”, an essential latitude and extravagance, resulting in these days being transformed into days of joy and happiness, to the point that the happiness is incomparable to the rest of the days of happiness.

We already have a spark and taste of this positive, inner aspect of the Three Weeks during *golus*, especially in more recent generations nearest to the time of Moshiach, which is when the idea of happiness and *geulah* in the month of Tammuz was revealed. This idea was manifested in the *Chag Hageulah* of the twelfth and thirteenth of Tammuz to the point that the whole month becomes a month of

18) *Parshas Vayeshev*, vol. 5, p. 900. See also *Ma'anos Kodesh* 5745, bottom of pp. 110ff.

19) *Parshas Maasei*

geulah. This is already visibly apparent before the days of the Three Weeks even begin so that, from the start, we should know the inner theme of these days.

The closer that we are to Moshiach, the less we feel the *churban* and *golus* during the Three Weeks. The feeling of preparing for the *geulah*, which is the good within these days, continually increases. Since we now find ourselves right before the *geulah*, the positive aspect of the Three Weeks is continuing to be increasingly felt and emphasized, and through this we will come to the complete *geulah*. Standing on the threshold of the *geulah*, **only** the positive of the Three Weeks is emphasized.

NUMBERS

We begin with the start of the Three Weeks, on the 17th of Tammuz. *Yud-zayin* (seventeen) has the same *gematria*, **numerical value**, as the word *tov* (good). This is because the 17th of Tammuz is “an auspicious day for Hashem”. Concerning the events that took place on this day, the primary of them (both chronologically and qualitatively) was the smashing of the *Luchos*. Despite this event being something undesirable, it has within it a positive element and, indeed, the highest type of good. How so? As a result of the smashing of the first set of *Luchos*, the second set of *Luchos* were given, which were “of a double strength”, (and thereby affected an increase of Torah) even to the point of infinity. The same applies to the culmination of the Three Weeks, the 9th of Av. How so? Because this is the day that Moshiach was born; the *mazel* of our righteous Moshiach was strongest during the moments of the *churban*.

The three **weekly parshios** of this time also carry themes closely associated with the *geulah*: In *Matos-Maasei* and *Devarim*, the Torah speaks of conquering and dividing the Holy Land (that includes the three areas of *Keini*, *Kenizi* and *Kadmoni*, which will only become ours in the future); previously, in *Pinchas*, there is the connection both in name: “Pinchas is Eliyahu” who will come and announce the future *geulah*, and the *parshah*’s content, which is about counting the *Yidden*, alluding to our tenth (and final) census in the future. It also speaks of dividing the Land, and mentions many *karbanos* (especially the *karbanos* of the festivals, hinting to the transformative nature of the Three Weeks to days of festival and rejoicing). Even earlier, preceding this time period, *Parshas Balak* explicitly prophesies Moshiach’s coming.

This also applies to the **number of the weeks**—Three Weeks—“because three is a *chazakah*, the strength of something ‘fixed.’” The Three Weeks are a *chazakah* in matters of holiness. As well, there is the idea of a descent of three gradations, which makes it as if the descent has an established *chazakah* and power, and thus an incomparable ascent is accomplished. The essential theme of the Three Weeks is the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash*, which will be for all of eternity being the work of Hashem Himself, and totally incomparable to the first two *Batei Mikdash*.

The same applies to the **number of days** of this time period. There are twenty-one days in the Three Weeks, which is the amount of time it takes for an almond

to grow. This is the fastest gestation period of any fruit, representing an alacrity and speediness with great overpowering strength to annul the obstacles and impediments of *golus*. This is apparent in a detail of the process as well: Almonds are bitter when they are small, and when they finish ripening (at twenty-one days) they become sweet. The point of the Three Weeks is to transform these days into days of rejoicing and happiness, happy and sweet days.

THREE WEEKS' RESTRICTIONS

The laws and restrictions of *Bein Hametzarim* commence on the **evening** of the 17th of Tammuz.

HAIRCUTS

Both men and women²⁰ refrain from cutting their hair during this period. This includes all facial hair as well as hair anywhere else on the body. Adults may not cut children's hair.

We are also restricted from trimming or waxing eyebrows, mustaches and the like, even hair around the private parts. If the mustache interferes with eating, it may be trimmed.

However, it is permissible—indeed it is a *mitzvah*—to cut a forelock (*tshup*, in Yiddish) during the Three Weeks.²¹

When a boy's third birthday falls during the Three Weeks, the *upshernish* is delayed until the tenth of Av after midday. However, since this year the fast is on Thursday, the cutting takes place on the morning of the tenth of Av (Friday). This however does not include the other customs associated with the *upshernish*, such as wearing *tzitzis*, saying the morning *brochos*, *Birchas Hamazon* and the bedtime *Shema*; these should begin on the day of the birthday.

Until Rosh Chodesh Av, it is permissible to cut and style a *sheitel* and it is not considered cutting hair. (Concerning the time after Rosh Chodesh, see further in the laws of the Nine Days.)

ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

It is permissible to get engaged and host a *L'chaim* during the Three Weeks. However, during the Nine Days (starting from Rosh Chodesh Av), we do not hold a festive meal for the occasion; rather, light refreshments may be served.

Weddings may not be held, even without a festive meal, and even for someone who has not yet fulfilled his obligation of bearing children. This includes the remarriage of a divorced couple.

²⁰ A woman may cut hair for reasons of modesty, as well as in preparation for *mikvah* (even if it is during the Nine Days for an immersion following *Tishah B'av*, as we refrain from trimming three days before immersing). She may also remove any body hair that could render her unattractive to her husband, even during the Nine Days.

²¹ See www.halacha2go.com, Halacha #243

We may conduct a *sheva brochos* meal during this time without music or dancing.

SHEHECHIYANU

It is best to avoid making a *Shehechyanu* blessing during the Three Weeks. Therefore, we refrain from eating new fruit²² or wearing new clothing. Our custom is to refrain from blessing *Shehechyanu* at any time during the Three Weeks, even on Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh.

The restriction on new clothing during the Three Weeks applies to garments of substantial worth. Clothing of lesser significance may be purchased and worn until Rosh Chodesh Av—this includes underwear, socks and shoes. Someone may also purchase and wear a new pair of *tzitzis*. New glasses are also permitted, provided they are for improved vision, not pleasure.

Someone whose wife gives birth to a daughter should make the blessing of *Shehechyanu* upon seeing her for the first time, even during the Three Weeks. A father also blesses *Shehechyanu* at his firstborn son's *pidyon haben* during the Three Weeks.

The *brochah* of *hatov vehameitiv* may be recited during the Three Weeks.

DANCING & MUSIC

Dancing is prohibited during the Three Weeks.

We may not play²³ or listen to music, including recorded music. Some are lenient to listen to music which is only vocals (without instruments). However, many contemporary *poskim* say this is the same as music. Certainly, some of these recordings sound very professional and essentially negate the original purpose of the custom. However, there is room to be lenient when listening to slow *niggunim* that are recorded primarily with vocals and only some background musical accompaniment.

Listening to music in order to stay alert while driving for extended periods is permissible—even obligatory—especially when driving through the night.

The prohibition on music applies at camps too, especially since the camp's objective is to educate children toward *yiras Shamayim*. In a day camp or daycare setting, where it is necessary to calm younger children who have not reached the age of *chinuch*, and the music is not intended for joy, the Morah may be lenient.

Music lessons or practice for students are permitted from the 17th of Tammuz

²²) A pregnant woman may eat a new fruit without blessing *Shehechyanu*, out of concern that an unsatisfied craving may endanger the child. Similarly, an ill person may eat a new fruit without reciting *Shehechyanu*.

²³) A professional musician may play for non-Jews until Rosh Chodesh Av excluding the actual day of the 17th of Tammuz.

until Rosh Chodesh Av when they are for the purpose of developing skills to earn a livelihood. However, learning for pleasure is prohibited.

We refrain from dancing and playing music even at a *seudas mitzvah*, such as a bar mitzvah, *siyum*, *sheva brochos* and similar occasions.

The Rebbe answers someone regarding a *Siyum Sefer Torah* during the Three Weeks: “It needs further study; a more suitable date would be appropriate.” The Rebbe negates holding such an event after Rosh Chodesh Av.

TRAVEL, TRIPS & GENERAL SAFETY

The Three Weeks is a time of heightened risk and we must take care to avoid any element of danger.

From the 17th of Tammuz, we refrain from going out alone between the end of the fourth halachic hour until the end of the ninth halachic hour.²⁴ Similarly, we take care not to walk in a place that is in between the sun and the shade. This all only applies in a desolate place. However, where there are passersby, the concern doesn’t apply.

Trips should be less frequent during the Three Weeks. But if the excursions are for health reasons or as an incentive for Torah learning, they are certainly permitted.

From *Likkutei Dibburim*²⁵: During the two midsummer months (in Lubavitch) from Shavuos until *Shabbos Nachamu*—except for a certain break during the Three Weeks, which were days of real mourning, the laws of the period being punctiliously observed in all their details—people would sometimes take a little stroll across the marketplace between Mincha and Maariv. No one ever went out for a walk between Pesach and Shavuos, but from then on people took the opportunity of enjoying the pleasant summer weather.

Swimming—in a pool or the ocean—is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av. However, extra caution must be exercised. Many refrain from swimming in rivers due to the danger they present.

When an extended trip is necessary, it is proper to make significant preparations before the 17th of Tammuz, to emphasize that the trip began before the Three Weeks.

MEDICAL CARE

When possible, it is proper to delay complex medical procedures until after *Tishah B’av*—as the popular saying goes: “Any delay is good.” If the doctor insists, it should definitely be scheduled before *Shabbos Chazon*.

Of course, in a life-threatening situation, any procedure should be done

²⁴) Calculated by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve parts. Thus 1/12 of the day is a halachic hour. For example, if the sun rises at 5 am and sets at 7:30 pm, a halachic hour is 72.5 minutes.

²⁵) (English) vol. 1, p. 241. Published by *Kehos*, 5747

immediately without any delay.

Routine procedures that pose no risk may be performed, including dental care and the like.

Children and students should be rebuked gently; no parent or teacher should use corporal punishment at all during the Three Weeks.²⁶

HOUSE-BUYING, MOVING, RENOVATING

Though some are stringent and refrain from buying homes during the Three Weeks because it is an "inauspicious time", according to the letter of the law someone may buy a **residential** home, especially if they will incur a loss by forfeiting the deal. (It is permitted even during the Nine Days.) When the closing is after *Tishah B'av*, there is no concern at all.

It is customary not to move into a new home during the Three Weeks (even when *Shehechyanu* wouldn't be recited). It is proper to move in after the fifteenth of Av, and if possible, in the month of Elul, which is the month of mercy.

Expansion of living quarters is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av, though many avoid starting a new build during this time.²⁷

As well, small home improvements may be done until Rosh Chodesh, but decorating the house, such as painting, should be avoided. If someone already contracted a non-Jew and they began the job, it may be completed until Rosh Chodesh Av.

Someone who has moved into a new home before the 17th of Tammuz should not schedule a *Chanukas Habayis* feast during the Three Weeks.

THE REBBE'S HORA'OS

(from the preface to *Chidushim U'bi'urim B'hilchos Beis Habechirah*)

Torah & Tzedakah: In accordance with the verse, "*Tziyon* will be redeemed with justice (*mishpat*) and those who return to her—with *tzedakah*", we should increase in both Torah study (*mishpat*), specifically in the halachos of *Bein Hametzarim*, and *tzedakah* during the Three Weeks.

Five Periods: The Three Weeks are subdivided into periods of increasing intensity: 1. From the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av 2. from Rosh Chodesh until the week of the 9th of Av 3. the week of *Tishah B'Av* itself 4. the day before the fast and 5. the actual fast day. We should intensify our Torah and Tzedakah at each ensuing phase of the Three Weeks.

Erev Rosh Chodesh: On the day before Rosh Chodesh Av, we should especially

²⁶) Regarding hitting in general, see www.asktherav.com #6349 for a comprehensive discussion.

²⁷) See www.asktherav.com #15381

amplify our Torah study, prayer and *tzedakah*. We should at least distribute the monetary equivalent of two meals to *tzedakah* – and ideally, the equivalent of **three** meals.

Preempt with Positive: We should resolve to fulfill the above directive **before** the Three Weeks commence. Those who have not yet made such a resolution should do so **at their very first opportunity**—and the sooner (even by a moment) the better!²⁸ Obviously, someone who failed to accomplish any of the above directives on the applicable dates should make it up afterwards.

Mivtzoim: During the Three Weeks, we should put special effort into the mitzvah campaigns: Ahavas Yisrael, Kosher Education, Torah-Study, Torah Books, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Shabbos Candles, Kosher Diet and Family Purity.

MORE LOVE

In several *sichos kodesh*, the Rebbe explains how the reason for the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* was baseless hatred, and that in order to undo the cause we need to increase in *Ahavas Yisrael*, love for a fellow Jew, and *Achdus Yisrael*, unity of the Jewish people in a manner of baseless love. This includes the areas of Torah, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* as a community—with special emphasis on these acts during the Three Weeks. Now, standing on the threshold of the *geulah*, it is certain that the reason for the *golus* has already been rectified, and so the emphasis on *Ahavas Yisrael* is in the way of a taste (of the future), to the point that this love is the beginning of the *geulah*. The *geulah* is tied with a point of Jewish unity that is higher than any division. This is emphasized in the togetherness of *Yidden* when on the level of *yechidah* (the very essence of the soul), which is a spark of the *neshamah* of Moshiach, who is the *yechidah klolis* (general *yechidah* of all Jews).

HILCHOS BEIS HABECHIRAH

Make it a point to study about the *Beis Hamikdash*²⁹ during the Three Weeks. This learning is also applicable to women and children.³⁰

WHAT TO LEARN

“In the days preceding *erev Tishah B’Av* and *Tishah B’Av*,” the Rebbe says,³¹ “we must study the necessary halachos and the established *shiurim* that we have. Increase in learning the *perakim* of the *navi* Yechezkel that discusses all about the *Beis Hamikdash*, its exits and entrances, and the commentaries on those chapters. Then go on to *Meseches Middos* with commentaries, and finally, *Hilchos Beis*

28) “According to the halachic ruling in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 571:3”

29) Primary sources include: From *Tanach*, from the *Navi* Yechezkel from chapter 40 & on; in the *Mishnah* and *Gemara, Mesechtos Tamid* and *Midos*; In the *Rambam’s Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, adding in all these the explanations and commentary that are expanded upon in *Chassidus*.

30) See the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 496ff. Also, *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5740. In *Sichas Kodesh*, pp. 658ff.

31) From the *sichah* of *erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*, 24 Tammuz, 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh*, p. 485

Habechirah, the laws of the *Beis Hamikdash* of the Rambam's *Mishnah Torah* with its *mefarshim*. It is certain that Hashem will then keep His promise that 'I consider it as if they are involved in its construction.' And this is the preparation that will result most speedily in the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash* in its designated palace, with the coming of Moshiach, now."

HOW TO LEARN

"Standing on the threshold of Moshiach, who is coming immediately," says the Rebbe,³² "it is understood that the study of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* needs to be **in an entirely different way**; at the very least, the learning shouldn't be because one is overcome with emotions of mourning and due to his efforts to rectify the lack that resulted from the *churban Beis Hamikdash*, but because of the yearning and desire for Hashem and the completion of the third *Beis Hamikdash*... Additionally, and more essentially, the study should be an outcome of the completely certain knowledge and recognition that these aren't 'the (farfetched) halachos of Moshiach', but they are **actual, pertinent halachos for the coming moment**, since the 'future *mikdash* that we anticipate is built and perfected (already now above, and immediately) will be revealed and will come from the Heaven' **this very moment!**"

WHEN TO LEARN

At this time, in 5740, the Rebbe spoke³³: "We are now starting the Three Weeks and I was waiting to see if anyone would talk about (studying *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*) this year, and I see that no one has. So now that it's ten days from the 17th of Tammuz, a few days before the Nine Days, someone thought to put a notice about this in the newspaper! And only then did people find the courage to write to me all perturbed, asking if it's appropriate to learn the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year because I haven't mentioned it yet! But, we have already mentioned this the last four years, and we have mentioned that we should publicize this all over, and that's what we have actually done, and it was accepted in several places. And I have not said this in a way of 'a decree I have decreed' (without explanation), but I have also given a reason for this, and the reason is relevant every year this time, this year included.

"And since we have already done it for three years, we must continue, because the halachah is that if someone does something three times, and he didn't say *bli neder*, he must continue to do it, and it is certain that in the past years we didn't say *bli neder* when we have studied *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, because I didn't mention that we have to. It is therefore certain that we need to do it this year as well! And despite all that, someone asks me a question if we have to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year—does every single thing need to be repeated over and over?! And may it be His will that since we have at least now caught on and placed a notice in the newspaper, we should follow from now on what it says in

32) *Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5751, part 9

33) *Roshei Devarim of the sichah of Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*

the notice, that we should learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* in the coming days, and specifically in the Nine Days, and more specifically in the week which *Tishah B'Av* falls, and most especially on *erev Tishah B'Av* and *Tishah B'Av* itself. And certainly we need to study today, since Moshiach is coming today; and so too, if, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not come by tomorrow, we will also have to learn tomorrow...

“Even once Moshiach arrives we must learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Even though Moshiach will build the *Beis Hamikdash*, every *Yid* can potentially contribute. Say, Moshiach will be building the *Beis Hamikdash*, and one detail there won't be according to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* of the Rambam. Any *Yid* should be able to go over to our righteous Moshiach and ask him—of course, with this introduction, ‘With all due respect to *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, who is one of the “eight princes of Man” and of the “seven Shepherds”...perhaps, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* has constructed a detail of the *Beis Hamikdash* not as it is in Rambam? And if it is so, where is the source to change how the Rambam rules? Being that ‘Torah is not in the Heavens’ and ‘a shy person doesn't learn’, if a *Yid* will doubt the way Moshiach is building the *Beis Hamikdash*, he may, and he **must**, ask him about it. And certainly Moshiach will bear no grudge and not become vexed, since he knows that the path of Torah learning is ‘the shy person doesn't learn’, and he will therefore certainly respond to his question.”

WHO SHOULD LEARN

And in 5741³⁴: These days we must endeavor to learn the parts of Torah that are connected to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, and to influence other *Yidden* in the same way, because through this every *Yid* builds the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the foundation of the entire world. As is explained in the words of *Chazal*, that in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash* on the Temple Mount is the *even hashetsiya*, the foundation stone, from which the entire world exists. As a result, every man and woman who learns *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* builds the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! During this time, we need to go out into the street and find a *Yid* and say to him, “Listen up! You need to build the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!” This will be accomplished through learning the parts of Torah connected to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He may claim in return that he doesn't know any of the *Alef-Beis*, not even know the *Alef-Beis* (the very basics) of *Yiddishkeit*. Tell him: “All this deliberation has no place when you need to build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! Ay, you don't understand the parts of Torah connected to the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Lashon Hakodesh*, so learn the material in another language—but you must build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!”

When we know that every single person is building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world through learning the part of Torah connected with the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, all deliberations that result from a lack of emotional or spiritual serenity fall away, because what are they worth compared to building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world, (that place) “from which the entire world exists”?.

34) *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos*

“And through this,” we declare to every Jew, “you accomplish that these days [of the Three Weeks] will be transformed to days of rejoicing and happiness and *yomim tovim*, with the true and final *geulah*, immediately!

THE BOTTOM LINE

In reference to all this, the Rebbe's words, brought in *Likkutei Sichos*,³⁵ implore us: “This is the main thing here: **now** is the time to be involved in these efforts (to learn and publicize the learning of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*), to begin them even before *Bein Hametzarim*, before the Nine Days. This opportunity must be, as in the vernacular, ‘a priority, with extra attentiveness and alacrity, more intense and stronger, the effort doubled and quadrupled, exponentially greater than at any other time’. However, if for any reason, a day or two passes without action, we must simply apply ourselves even more assiduously, and make up for what we missed with an augmented learning schedule. And since, in this case, there is an aspect of guilt of having missed a peak juncture in time, do as *Chazal* advises: If you are accustomed to reading one page, now read two etc.—and thereby ‘double down’ in this undertaking.”

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, EVE OF 17 TAMMUZ

For a fast that begins in the morning, such as this one, you may eat until dawn (see time below) if you did not go to sleep for the night. Temporarily dozing off does not constitute going to sleep. If you did sleep properly before the fast, you can only eat if you stipulated before going to sleep that you would eat or drink when you awake. Someone who usually rises to drink during the night can drink without making a stipulation.

Even if you have satisfied the requirements of being able to eat before the fast, do not begin a proper meal within a halachic half-hour of dawn. You may snack on fruit, vegetables and non-alcoholic beverages, and eat up to a *kebeitzah* of *mezonos*.³⁶

NIGHT UN-FAST

On the eve of the tenth of Teves 5752, the Rebbe explains that although the tenth of Teves begins at night (as is the case with all Jewish dates), the actual fast only begins at dawn. The lack of fasting on the eve of the tenth of Teves symbolizes the power that is granted at that time to reverse the negative events that the fast day commemorates. It is an auspicious time for *teshuvah* that will bring the Redemption and a night of opportunity to forever nullify the fast before it begins. The Rebbe pointed out that the night stretches for a number of hours, which offers ample time for *teshuvah*.

³⁵) vol. 13, p. 279

³⁶) Generally, the volume of food that would fit into two small matchboxes.

THURSDAY, 17TH OF TAMMUZ

This day is a communal fast day during which eating and drinking is forbidden, as it is the day that the walls of Yerushalayim were breached.

There were five events that occurred throughout history on the 17th of Tammuz: 1. The *Luchos* were broken 2. The *Korban Tamid* ceased in the *Beis Hamikdash* 3. During the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached (4) The wicked Apostomus burned the Torah (5) A graven image was put in the *heichal*.

THE FAST

The main purpose of observing a fast day is to awaken our hearts toward the path of *teshuvah*. *Poskim* write that the fast obligates a person to examine their deeds and rectify the negative ones—refraining from eating and drinking are but a means by which to focus ourselves inward to *teshuvah*.³⁷ Those who utilize the fast day as a break in their normal schedule for trips or other banal activities make the minor aspect all-important while ignoring its essential purpose.

The Rambam writes that to truly experience the spiritual weight of the fast day, we must not occupy our time with frivolous or enjoyable activities, but feel bothered and distressed, as the *posuk* in *Eichah* states: “Of what should a living person complain? Their own sins...” The *Shaloh* adds that anyone who does not fast with purpose is merely torturing themselves (with gratuitous thirst and hunger). The true intention of fasting is to put mind over matter and focus on spirituality when we are without the physical constraints of feeding and hydrating the body—similar to the experience of *Olam Haba* where we will be fully occupied in enjoying the rays of shining, G-dly light without distraction. On this day, we can access this spiritual delight today, with our acts of *teshuvah*, prayer, *tzedakah*—and Torah study, which is equal to them all.

EXEMPTIONS

Pregnant women, or nursing women who have difficulty fasting, and other people feeling ill, are exempt.

A *Chosson* and *Kallah* during their *sheva brachos*, the week following their wedding, fast today.

The custom is that for a *bris* which takes place on the 17th of Tammuz, the father, *mohel* and *sandek* still fast. A minor child is given the wine to drink and the *seudah* takes place that night.

Someone who is exempt from fasting should refrain from eating delicacies and should suffice with only as much food as is necessary.

³⁷) though it is not halachically acceptable to disingenuously avoid fasting with a *teshuvah*-focused day.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: FAST TO FEAST

All fasts will be nullified when Moshiach comes. Moreso, they are destined to be *yomim tovim* and days of rejoicing.

The last halachah on fasting in the *Shulchan Aruch* states: "These days will be transformed to joyous occasions in the Future Era." The Rebbe notes³⁸ that this statement is halachically binding in the here and now as well (for what is *Shulchan Aruch* but a guide for living today?). How? Our acts of *teshuvah* and fasting affect our current circumstances to the point that they have the power to actually transform the fast day into a Yom Tov.

FASTING

The fast begins from dawn (*alos hashachar*), at **3:44 am**.³⁹

Someone who travels to a different time zone during the fast continues to fast until nightfall (*tzeis hakochovim*) of the place that they are in at that time.⁴⁰

It is a *minhag Yisrael* to increase *tzedakah* on fast days. We estimate the value of what we would have eaten that day and give it to a poor person on the eve of the fast.

We do not rinse our mouths on a fast day.⁴¹

EATING BY MISTAKE

Someone who mistakenly breaks their fast must still complete it. They are not required to compensate by fasting on a different day (unless they choose to as an atonement for breaking the fast). If someone eats less than a *koseves* (the size of a large date) within the timeframe of *k'dei achilas pras*,⁴² or drinks less than a *revis*, they are still considered to be fasting and pray *Aneinu* as normal. If they consumed more than that, they should replace the words "*Aneinu b'yom tzom ta'aniseinu*" with "*Aneinu b'yom tzom hata'anis hazeh*" during Minchah.

Bathing and doing laundry on the fast of the 17th of Tammuz are permitted.⁴³

SHACHARIS

Only the *chazzan* says *Aneinu*, and only during the repetition of the *Amidah*.

38) In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 416; see fn 38.

39) There are various methods of calculating sunrise. This time is according to the opinion that *alos hashachar* is when the angle of the rising sun is the position of 1.16 degrees from the horizon.

40) If extremely weak, and fasting is causing great difficulty, there is room for leniency to break the fast at the time the fast is over in the location of origin.

41) If there is specific need—such as for a halitosis sufferer, the mouth can be rinsed, but use astringent wash and lean forward so none of it is inadvertently swallowed. See www.asktherav.com #1988

42) The halachic span of time that is based on the norm for someone consuming a half-loaf of bread.

43) Though there are some who maintain that *ba'alei nefesh* (very pious individuals) should avoid bathing with hot water, and even institute all the constraints of *Tishah B'av* on other fasts as well. See the discussion on www.halacha2go.com #346 and www.asktherav.com #19897

In both Shacharis and Minchah, *Aneinu* is recited by the *chazzan* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. If a *chazzan* mistakenly omits *Aneinu*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

Selichos are said during davening. The order for Shacharis is as follows: *Chazaras Hashatz* followed by *Tachanun* and *Nefilas Apayim*; *Vehu Rachum, Selichos* (starting with *Al titnu*; omit *Ashamnu*); the long *Avinu Malkeinu* and then *Va'anachnu lo nedah*; half-*Kaddish, Kel Erech Apaim*. Then the *sefer Torah* is brought out and three *aliyos* are read from the section *Vayechal Moshe*.

The *minhag* in 770 is that when there is a *chosson*, a *bris* was held that day, or the like, the congregation (aside from the *chosson* and the *ba'al habris*) says *Selichos*, but omit *Tachanun, Nefilas Apayim* and *Avinu Malkeinu*. When this is done, start with *Selach lanu* and continue without omitting anything; *viduy* of *Ashamnu* is said.

INTRODUCTORY 3

The Rebbe explains⁴⁴: Before starting *Selichos* on the 17th of Tammuz, we headline the Three Weeks with the recitation of three *pessukim*, which can be considered the most essential aspect of the *Selichos* in general, which can be compared to the role of the *Amidah*. The content of these three verses, and the order as well, are significant.

The first of these is not about personal accounting as would be expected when beginning supplicatory prayers, but with an outcry—one sourced in Torah—of *Al Titnu* (“**And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem praised in the land**”)⁴⁵ which is a demand from Hashem to not only rebuild Yerushalayim, but not to be silent and continue to implore and beg until Yerushalayim reaches the stage of receiving accolades.

The reasoning for this is stated in the next verse we recite, *Ki imcha* (“**For with You is the Source of life, in Your light we will see light.**”)⁴⁶ It is the belief that Hashem brings into being and continuously enlivens everything, including this *golus* (which is long and terrible), but because we know it is “with Him” and that He is “the source of life”, that we realize that eventually its inner greatness and purpose will be revealed in the Future Era, when darkness will be transformed into light. And how will we “see the light”? Through “His light”, which is the Torah that illuminates the path of Man and which states, “give Him no rest” (and demand the *geulah*).

Only with these prefaces can the mind and heart focus, and be capable of the true, complete *teshuvah* alluded to in third statement, *Elokeinu* (“**Hashem, we are ashamed of our deeds and repentant of our sins**”). The core aspect and the most timely insistence remains the first *possuk*, not remaining silent concerning the extant *churban*, which infuses the appropriate meaning into

44) *Sichas Tes-Vav Tammuz* 5742, at the end of the farbrengen after saying the *brachah acharonah*.

45) *Yeshayahu* 62:7

46) *Tehillim* 36:10

our admittance of wrongdoing that it should have the strength of a true and internally impactful return to Hashem. In fact, the very act implied by the first *possuk*—turning to Hashem and demanding the *geulah*—is the implicit action needed for complete *teshuvah*.

TODAY'S PARSHAH

"This is not well publicized and has been applied by very few," the Rebbe says in 5748,⁴⁷ "But on the 17th of Tammuz, there are those who study the chapters regarding fasts from the *Neviim*, similar to the custom of saying a chapter of Tehillim specific to each day (*Shir shel Yom*) and similar; these texts are the '*parshah*' of today. Now, the Torah is eternal, so even when Moshiach comes, we will include these parts of *Neviim* that discuss fast days. Because this is the '**Torah** of (Eternal) **Truth**' and the '**Torah** of **Light**', the good in every aspect shines through (even within these negative passages about fast days). This is explained elsewhere⁴⁸ concerning the words 'Yaakov and Eisav who are spoken about in the *parshah*.' This means that we can access the good that is in these fasts as they will be transformed into days of rejoicing and *yomim tovim* (literally, '**good** days') in the future. So on the contrary (learning about the fast days from the *Neviim* is not a focus on negativity, but) through learning about the temporary descent, this magnifies the happiness and *yom tov* aspect."

If it is necessary to taste the food that is being readied for Shabbos for the sake of accurate preparation, you may rely on those authorities that permit tasting a small quantity and then spitting it out.

MINCHAH

It is preferable to daven Minchah earlier, finishing before *shkiah* (8:29) so that it does not run into twilight (*bein hashmoshos*). In addition to the fact that it is appropriate to daven Minchah before *shkiah* every day, on a fast day specifically this is the correct thing to do. In the event that someone does daven late, he may still conduct *Krias Hatorah* and *Maftir* even once it has reached *bein hashmoshos*.

The Torah reading of Shacharis is repeated for Minchah with the addition of *Maftir* for a fast day: *Dirshu Hashem*.

During the *Amidah*, *Aneinu* is recited by all (fasting) congregants during the blessing of *Shema Koleinu*. If it is mistakenly omitted, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

During *Chazaras Hashatz*, the *chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa' einu*. The *chazzan's* priestly blessing is recited before *Sim shalom*.

The order for Minchah is as follows: 1. *Vayedaber* (*Karbanos* for Minchah) 2.

47) *Sefer Hasichos*, p. 247, fn. 63

48) in *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 20, pp. 341ff; vol. 30, p.144 part 6; and others

Ashrei 3. half-Kaddish 4. *Vayehi binsoa* and *Krias Hatorah*, then *Maftir* and its blessings 5. *Yehalelu*, 6. half-Kaddish 7. *Amidah* (including *Anienu*) and *Chazaras Hashatz* 8. *Tachanun*, the long *Avinu Malkeinu* 9. *Kaddish tiskabel* 10. *Aleinu* and *Kaddish Yasom*.

Divrei Kevushin, an address that motivates its audience toward self-improvement, are said after *Minchah*.

MAARIV & BREAK-FAST

The fast ends after *Maariv* at **9:03 pm**.

There are various methods of calculating the time of nightfall (called *tzeis hakochavim*, when three stars are observable). Following the Alter Rebbe's opinion to account for "smaller stars" we generally wait some minutes after this time to say the nighttime *Shema*. But for the purpose of the fast, you may daven earlier, at the time detailed above, and then repeat the *Shema* sometime later.

FRIDAY, 18 TAMMUZ - EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Pinchas*. (See more details regarding this practice in last Friday's entry.)⁴⁹

Candle lighting is at **8:11 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS, 19 TAMMUZ

On this date in 5640 (1880), was the *bris milah* of the Frierdiker Rebbe (and the seventh day from his bar mitzvah thirteen years later, in 5653-1893). In various *sichos*, the Rebbe speaks about the spiritual strength of the great *simchah* to commemorate this day and its redemptive effect on the time we are currently experiencing—*Bein Hametzarim*, and its connection to the Final Geulah.⁵⁰

"Those days are recalled and recurring' spiritually," the Rebbe says in 5745,⁵¹ "but we live in a physical world of action (which includes practices of mourning for *Bein Hametzarim*), so we must try to find some way to give a *heter* to properly celebrate the (Frierdiker Rebbe's) *bris milah*. Perhaps there will be a current *simchah* like a *bris, pidyan haben*, or the like—since these are celebrations that are in accord with the halachos of *Shulchan Aruch* pertaining to the Three Weeks—and we will extend that *simchah* (to include the one of the Frierdiker Rebbe).

"And we will emphasize that even though the focus of this *simchah* is the halachic

49) The *Haftorah* this week is the one for the first Shabbos of the Three Weeks, *Divrei Yirmiyahu*. It would seem appropriate to say both this *Haftorah* and the one normally associated with *Parshas Pinchas* as is the usual practice while reciting *Shnayim Mikrah* when a timely *Haftorah* overrides the regularly scheduled one. (See the discussion in the Hebrew footnotes.)

50) See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5749* (in *Sefer Hasichos*, pp. 581ff) and others.

51) *Sichah* of 15 Tammuz; free translation transcribed from audio.

and *gashmiyus* one, still, for Yidden and Chassidim who live with the Rebbe, our Nasi, consistently it is as if today, actually, we are celebrating the bris of a dynamic person, one who grows each year, advancing higher 'from strength to strength' in a cumulative manner—so that this year (5745), is the 106th bris of the (Friediker) Rebbe!⁵² And therefore the celebration of the occasion is that many times greater!

“In rebuttal to those who may claim (‘those who seek allegations’) and take issue with such a non-required celebration—and in truth, this is a halachically-justified argument, not a pretext at all—which is why we should find an actual, halachah-sanctioned *simchah* of a *bris*, *pidyan haben*, or the like, and in the course of such, discuss a point of Chassidus originating from the *ba'al hasimchah* himself, the (Friediker) Rebbe, (mentioning that) he lives on and that each year reaches a higher level. And then we should continue the *farbrengen*—all this done in a way that is within the purview of the *Shulchan Aruch*. And regarding that it can be said, as is brought in Chassidus, that the one that places the limits on itself is not truly limited—and such can be said of the restrictions of the *Shulchan Aruch* in this case.⁵³

HAFTORAH

During the Three Weeks, the *Haftorah* of every Shabbos is one of the *Tilasa D'piranusa* (three selections from the Navi concerning *golus* and the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*). This Shabbos, the *Maftir* is *Divrei Yirmiyahu*.⁵⁴

POWER OF THREE

In Chassidus it is explained that *Tilasa D'piranusa* (the three *Haftoros* of disaster) correspond to the three intellectual faculties (Chochmah, Binah and Daas) and by contrast, the *Shiva D'nechemta* (seven *Haftoros* of comfort) that follow Tisha B'Av until Rosh Hashanah, correspond to the seven emotional attributes (Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus).

The concept of תלתא דפורענותא (*Tilasa D'Piranusa*) is, in its truest sense, positive. It is connected with the level of פרעה דקדושה (*Paroh D'kedushah*), a very great, holy light that אתפריעו (*ispari'u*), gushes forth; all other levels of spiritual light are revealed through this extremely high level of revelation.

THE SHABBOS EFFECT

“The melancholy aspects of the Three Weeks do not apply to Shabbos,” the Rebbe says on Shabbos during this time,⁵⁵ “because on Shabbos we must be happy.

52) This year is the 144th.

53) The Rebbe referenced this again the following Shabbos, *Sichas Parshas Balak* 5745, quoted in the Hebrew section footnotes on this topic.

54) If the regular *Haftorah* of Parshas Pinchas is read by mistake (in some other years, it is not yet in the Three Weeks), the *Haftorah* of *Divrei Yirmiyahu* should be read next week, together with the second of the Three *Haftoros*, *Shim'u* (the two segments are consecutive in the source in Navi).

55) *Sichah* of *Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5715. In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pp. 358ff.

Moreover, this particular Shabbos needs to be even more joyous than others so that there shouldn't be a suspicion that any lack of happiness is due to the Three Weeks."

This is the inner meaning of the concept: Shabbos is a taste of the future *geulah*, which is known as "*yom shekulo Shabbos*" (a time that is always [like] Shabbos). Since the *geulah* is defined as a time when no vestige of *golus* remains, so too no Shabbos may have any impression of the Three Weeks at all.

However, the above is no more than an explanation for why there cannot be any aspect that is the opposite of happiness. The reason why this Shabbos has to have even more *simchah* than others is based on the well-known adage that the redemption that follows the exile raises us to an even higher place than before the exile began...So Shabbos during the Three Weeks is a taste of Moshiach, "*yom shekulo Shabbos*", and thus mandates an extra dose of *simchah*. This is because the idea of **this** Shabbos is that we are given extra strength (thanks to a revelation of light of the future) to transform the Three Weeks into joy and happiness. This is in line with the *psak* in Shulchan Aruch that it is permitted to have our meals as "the meals of Shlomo's times" (i.e., in their full splendor), as in his days "the moon was in its fullness (and glory)." This Shabbos we are given the strength to transform these days (as they were then, and even better) into joy and happiness (of the *geulah*).

On Shabbos during the Three Weeks, we have to be even more joyous than any other Shabbos of the year, to remove any suspicion that anyone is practicing *aveilus* (acts of mourning, which are forbidden on Shabbos). There is a story of someone who wore non-leather clogs all the time. Unfortunately, he became an *avel* (mourner who lost a close relative). The Shabbos of the *shivah*, he asked a *sha'alah* whether he may keep wearing his clogs. The Rebbe's father (Harav Levi Yitzchak) *paskened* that he may not—so that no one should suspect that he is adhering to mourning practices on Shabbos.⁵⁶

TRANSFORMATION

From *Maor V'Shemesh*: Concerning what "the holy greats" say,⁵⁷ *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are exceedingly elevated. It appears to me that this is because the six days of the week (preceding the *Shabbosos*) are exceedingly low and minimized.

It is known that on Shabbos, all worlds are elevated and this (in turn) elevates the six days of the week. Hence (now, during the Three Weeks), because everything that was so minimized is brought up so high, it is understood that the *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are extremely elevated. This is unlike the rest of the *Shabbosos* during the year, when, being as the days of the week aren't as exceedingly low, the elevation isn't as high as the *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks, when all the things that were in the lowest of the low, in the valleys of the abyss, have been elevated to holiness.

56) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1091

57) Brought in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 25. There it says: (The author) was a student of the Mezritcher Maggid's students; certainly he's referring to them.

BEIN HAMETZARIM MATH

The Tzemach Tzedek explains how the three *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks have the ability to transform the negativity into positivity, according to Kabbalah:

Temporally, the Three Weeks are what the *midbar* (desert) is spatially, and representative of *golus* in general. The three *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are the “cure that preempts the illness”. To understand this we make a calculation that accounts the following:

Every Shabbos can be considered as two *Shabbosos* (because each Shabbos comprises two aspects) and there are three Shabbosos in the Three Weeks.

$$2 \times 3 = 6$$

The seven days of the week during the Three Weeks are illuminated by the double *Shabbosos*.

$$6 \times 7 = 42$$

It is through the Shabbos aspect of every day of the Three Weeks that we remediate the forty-two journeys of the *midbar-golus* to finally reach *Eretz Yisrael*. What does this mean? Through the *Shabbosos*, we cure the negative side of the Three Weeks.

HOW TO FARBRENG

“A unique issue occurs,” says the Rebbe in 5744,⁵⁸ “concerning *Yidden* who have become so involved in worldly matters, that during those special times when it is incumbent upon them to release themselves from worldly affairs and become steeped in spiritual matters, they have great difficulty doing so. This is especially with regard to feeling the pain of the descent of *golus* to the point of thirsting for the comfort of Redemption...”

“When we come to the period of the Three Weeks—including Shabbos, as is highlighted by the fact that from Bereishis until the 17th of Tammuz, the *Haftarah* is connected to the weekly *parshah*, but starting from the first Shabbos of the Three Weeks, the theme relates to the events of the current time period—it is difficult to have influence upon the above-mentioned *Yid*, that he should be aroused with feelings of pain from being in the Three Weeks, and that he should thirst to be comforted by the *geulah*. Since he is steeped in the world of business, and he sees that Hashem is making him successful and is blessing him with children, health and sustenance, he doesn't feel like he's lacking in anything at all...”

“However, since Hashem doesn't demand of us more than our abilities, it's understood that, despite how difficult this is, it is still within the ability of every Jew... Since he is imbued with the knowledge and feeling that his truest existence is his *neshamah*, even when his physical matters of children, health and sustenance are not lacking, he knows and feels the extent of the pain of *golus*,

58) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Maasei*

especially when we are in the time period of the Three Weeks. Therefore, he will be in this state of thirsting for the comfort of Redemption.

“It would seem that there’s room to question the point of discussing all this during the *farbrengen*, that there is a need for us to remember that we are in the Three Weeks, which causes pain and sadness. Is this the purpose of the *farbrengen*? Certainly, there are unique laws for how to conduct oneself during the Three Weeks. But these laws have already been written in *Shulchan Aruch*, a *sefer* that every Jew certainly owns, or at least can get a hold of easily, and we should assume that every Jew acts correctly and studies the details of the laws relevant to each time period, and the *halachos* of every festival, and in the same way the laws unique to the Three Weeks.

“So, what is the purpose of discussing this topic? And even if there is a need to awaken the observance of these things, Hashem should have mercy and spare us from a *shlichus* like this, to remind Jews of an idea that is the opposite of happiness, *chas v’shalom*... Yet, on the contrary, the (Frierdiker) Rebbe instituted that we should *farbreng* on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, including *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av*, and it’s understood that, at the very least, we need to discuss *inyonei d’yoma* (time-relevant matters)!

“The guidance and saving grace for this is the concept of “Menachem-Av” (“Av of Comfort), meaning we must bring up topics that bring succor, and (ultimately) the concept of the annulment of the undesirable matters of the Three Weeks, by increasing in all matters of *Yiddishkeit*, in Torah and *mitzvos*, with happiness and good-heartedness.”

Tekufas Tammuz, the onset of the summer solstice, occurs today at 1:30 pm.⁵⁹

Pirkei Avos: In the tradition of extending the recital of the *perek* every Shabbos throughout the summer months, this week the sixth chapter of Avos is recited.⁶⁰

Shabbos ends at **9:19pm**.

FRIDAY, 25 TAMMUZ - EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Matos-Masei*. (See more details regarding this practice in the entry of Friday, 11 Tammuz.)⁶¹

59) The solstices and equinoxes are mentioned in the *Hayom Yom*'s introduction and also included in the year *Luach Kolel Chabad*. See Hebrew footnotes for some halachic details associated with this time, as well as sources from the Rebbe. See also [#494](http://www.halacha2go.com) and the sources mentioned there.

60) As mentioned in a footnote for the recitation last Shabbos, avoid the mention of Hashem’s name in the incomplete Torah verses mentioned in *Pirkei Avos*. This week, it applies in two places, both in Mishnah 10. We read, “*Ad ya’avor amcha Hashem...*” and “*machon leshivticha Hashem, mikdash Hashem...*”

61) In the *Hayom Yom* for 30 Sivan, it mentions that both *Haftoros* are recited when doing *shnayim mikra* in the case where there are two parshios (even though only one is read in shul after the reading). However, it does not mention the practice regarding the *Haftoros* of the Three Weeks and the seven weeks following. (The weekly *Haftorah* is related to a theme in the *parshah*; the practice of its reading was established at a time when Torah readings were forbidden and a selection from the *Neviim* was read as a reminder. Though the *Haftoros* for the Three Weeks and the seven following relate more generally to the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and its ultimate rebuilding, the Rebbe explains in many places how these *Haftoros* also relate to the *parshah* they are

Candle lighting is at **8:08 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI, MEVARCHIM MENACHEM-AV

The entire Tehillim is recited early in the morning.

After the Torah reading, we bless the month of Av.⁶²

The *molad*⁶³ is on Tuesday morning at 4:20 and 16/18 of a minute. Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av is next Wednesday.

We do not recite "*Av Harachamim*" before Musaf, as on every *Shabbos Mevarchim*.

THE LOUDEST AMEN

"What is special about *Shabbos Mevarchim Menachem Av*?" the Rebbe asks in 5747.⁶⁴ "Today, we draw down a blessing that is so powerful, it can transform all the negative aspects of the coming month—to the point that (even) *Tishah B'av* will be 'for joy and happiness and good times'. This is apparent in the language of the blessing for the new month, when we announce: 'Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, on the _____ day of the week'. The tradition (and a '*minhag* is Torah') is to call the month not merely Av but Menachem Av, preceding and superseding the name 'Av' with 'Menachem' and branding the time with the idea of comfort.

"Then, further on, in the blessing itself, we say, 'Renew it for us...as a salvation and comfort,' referring to the Redemption and (the subsequent) *succor* it will bring to the Jewish people and to Yerushalayim (as we say, 'comfort *Tziyon* and build Yerushalayim') and then we immediately add 'and we all say "Amen"'. This affirmation of 'Amen' is in close proximity to the salvation/comfort phrase, both when the congregation states it privately and the *chazzan* out loud. Even in the latter case, when each phrase of the blessing is followed by an 'Amen', none are so boisterous as that final one, giving it a stamp of truth and staying power. And in this prayer, we can come to understand the lofty quality of this *Shabbos Mevarchim* over all others."

YOU DIDN'T SING?

Concerning the *niggun* of *Hu Elokeinu* (that we sing during *Kesser* of Musaf), the Rebbe says⁶⁵: It has already been several years since singing *Hu Elokeinu* on

read with—since everything connected with Torah is meticulous and exact.) See Hebrew footnotes (including for Friday, 18 Tammuz) for guidance.

62) Some authorities hold that we do not bless the month on this *Shabbos*. The *Darchei Moshe*, in the name of *Haga'os Mordechai*, discredits this notion, saying that on the contrary, there is no time that the Jewish nation is more needful of blessings! See also *Sichas Shabbos Mevarchim Parshas Matos* 5741 (in *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 205 ff.

63) first appearance of the New Moon. The Alter Rebbe writes, "It is proper to know the *molad* before blessing the new month."

64) *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*

65) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5740

Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av was introduced, at a time most pertinent to the *geulah*. And yet this year, it didn't occur to anyone to start the *niggun*! Everyone was waiting for me to indicate with the finger that it is time to sing, but I was waiting to see if someone would have the *sechel* themselves and sing the *niggun*... What actually happened is that no one sang it! How many times do we have to do it until it will be self-understood that this is how it must be done?! In a few days, we will likely receive a letter from someone overseas demanding: "How can it be that you didn't sing *Hu Elokeinu* on *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av*?"

WHEN SAYING "AV" BRINGS HAPPINESS

From a *sichah* in the Three Weeks, 5733⁶⁶: Some *kehillos* have a custom to make changes from their normal mode of behavior from other *Shabbosei Mevorchim* throughout the year on account of the negative aspects associated with the beginning of this new month. Chabad does not follow this *minhag*—no such changes are made. (To the contrary), our practice is to **add in simchah**, reproaching the idea that one should act in a spirit of mourning on Shabbos.

Concerning Shabbos, it says, "there is no sadness to it", without qualification about which time of year a particular Shabbos falls. To the point that when it came to *Shabbos Chazon* (the Shabbos that immediately precedes *Tishah B'Av*), we find that the Alter Rebbe was careful not to make any alteration in his manner of dress, unlike the practice of other Torah greats of his time on that particular Shabbos. If it is the *minhag* to make no restrictive changes on Shabbos within the Nine Days, how much more so must we refrain from doing so to *Shabbos Mevorchim Av*, which occurs before the Nine Days begin.

To this point, we have spoken of our conduct as an outcome of the rule to refrain from sadness on Shabbos. However, since Torah is called "the Torah of Truth" and truth permeates all perspectives and details, we must conclude that the positive outlook on "the Shabbos that we bless the month of Av" is not only a result of its Shabbos-ness elevating its negative time-designation so that we override its need for change. No, it is the advent of the month of Av that also indicates that we do not change our normal practice. On the contrary, Torah's truth about today permeates all facets and we increase in *simchah* because we celebrate **both** today's "Shabbos" and "new month of Av" as positive aspects.

A DAY OF FARBRENGEN

At a *farbrengen* this Shabbos,⁶⁷ the Rebbe told a well-known story of his father Rav Levi Yitzchok about wearing (non-leather) slippers on a Shabbos that falls out during days of mourning, and then continued: There are those who go around every *Shabbos Mevarchim* wondering whether they should be in *merirus* (bitter), or, perhaps, just *atzvus* (melancholy). Every other *Shabbos Mevarchim*, you can give them the benefit of the doubt that they are lacking sleep, are weary, lazy, or the like. This *Shabbos Mevarchim*, the possibility of the benefit of the doubt rises because of

66) *Roshei Devarim Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*

67) From the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos*, 5714. In *Sichos Kodosh*, pp. 363 ff.

the Three Weeks. However, this theme of the Three Weeks cannot be applied to Shabbos. As is known, certain provinces had the custom of singing *Lecha Dodi* to the "Tishah B'Av niggun" in this time period and later, there were terrible decrees in those areas.

So even if there is something lacking in the strength (of your *simchah*) every other *Shabbos Mevarchim*, this *Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to have an extra dose of happiness. As the Frierdiker Rebbe stated, "*Shabbos Mevarchim* needs to be a joyous Shabbos!" So, in order to circumvent any suspicion, **this** *Shabbos Mevarchim* our happiness needs to be greater.

SHABBOS AFTERNOON

Today is a day of *farbrengen*.

After Minchah, *Pirkei Avos* is said (with the addition of one Mishnah learned in depth with Chassidic interpretation). This week the first chapter is recited (for the third time).

Shabbos ends at **9:15pm**.

TUESDAY, 29 TAMMUZ - EREV ROSH CHODESH AV

Erev Rosh Chodesh is called a "mini Yom Kippur" with spiritual practices associated with it. The Rebbe's directive concerning today is that we should add (even more than any other *erev Rosh Chodesh* throughout the year) in Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. The amount for *tzedakah* (in lieu of fasting) should be the total to replace two meals for the day, or even better, all three.

WHY NOW?

"This *farbrengen* taking place now in the Three Weeks," the Rebbe says on *erev Rosh Chodesh Av 5735*,⁶⁸ "is seemingly a new-fangled idea, one that required me to work hard searching for some sort of halachic loophole to allow it. So the best *heter* I found is with regards to the Three-Weeks' performances of a professional musician whose *parnassah* depends on their playing music even during this time. But it must be, as *poskim* determine, with some qualifications, such as that the musical event must exclude dancing..

"**This** is *my* livelihood, so I have no choice to *farbreng*, despite the Three Weeks. And when it comes to the parameters of the joy associated with singing, as we stated earlier with regard to musicians, when it comes to *niggunim*, there is a clear halachic leniency, brought even by latter-day *poskim*..

"Since the subject (of the *farbrengen*) is connected with the Nine Days, it is not an appropriate topic for much earlier (before the Three Weeks); even talking today, only one day before, may cause a person to lose heart, and take it as a sign that Moshiach will not be here by tomorrow, *chas v'shalom*. So we wait until the last

68) Free translation of transcription from audio

moments of the day preceding the Nine Days, a time when (as Yirmiyahu states), the summer has passed, the harvest ended and yet we have not been saved...”

“The spirit in which Hashem sends us the cure (to the events of the Nine Days),” says the Rebbe in a *sichah* of *erev Rosh Chodesh Av*,⁶⁹ “(which He does in the manner of ‘I am Hashem your Healer) is in the form of preventative measures, ‘I will not put it on you’—(‘He sends the cure) **before** the malady’. Therefore: all our efforts in acts of adding in Torah learning, tzedakah, etc. need to start even before the ‘the onset of the month of Av (when joy decreases)’. Let us advise how today...*erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av*, each and every one of you will accept upon yourself (resolutions) in all of these—personal acceptance and also publicizing these directives within your sphere of influence.

“And may it be Hashem’s Will, that all this will hasten the promise that ‘these days will be transformed to joy and happiness’ in a way of ‘I will not place on you’, meaning that they will start off as days of joy and happiness.”

NINE DAYS PREP

It is recommended that all laundered clothing you intend to wear throughout the Nine Days should be worn for a short amount of time today (as long as it takes for the freshly-laundered feeling to recede). We are restricted from wearing newly-washed clothes during the Nine Days because of the pleasure derived from the experience. This restriction does not apply to under-clothing.⁷⁰

LEARN TO KNOW

“It’s time to remind everyone,” the Rebbe says in a *sichah* of Rosh Chodesh Av,⁷¹ “to be judicious in learning the halachos applicable to this period of time. I am greatly surprised that no one has made any brouhaha (*tumul*) about this, in line with the clamor accompanying the campaign to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Learning these straight-out halachos in *Shulchan Aruch* is much more timely and relevant (*z’man gerama*) than studying *Hilchos Beis Hebechirah*. Obviously, this includes those pertaining to the Nine Days as well those regarding the (general time period) already transpiring of the Three Weeks as well.”

All this talk concerning our conduct in this time period, the Rebbe says,⁷² must be prefaced and supplemented with the caveat, “if Moshiach’s coming is delayed, *chas veshalom*,” since (as stated in the Rambam’s Principles of Faith), “we anticipate him”

69) 5734 (in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 13, p. 278)

70) If you neglected to do so on Tuesday, it is possible to give them to a Sefardic compatriot to try them on anytime this week, as their tradition is to avoid laundered clothing only during the week of *Tishah B’Av* itself.

71) In 5748; free translation of transcription from audio. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Masei* (see more from this occasion further on): “There are also laws that apply to our behavior during *Bein Hametzarim*, but the specifics of these appear in *Shulchan Aruch*—a sefer that surely every Jew has in their possession or is easily accessible to them, and since we make favorable assumptions of every Jew, each of you surely learns the appropriate timely halachos of each season, and has done the same with regard to the halachos of the Three Weeks.”

72) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5751

that he will come today, actually. So any resolutions (in the realm of our Divine service during *golus*) must be accompanied by the above stipulation. The truth is, though, that even after Moshiach arrives we will continue to grow in Torah and *avodah*, building on the good resolutions of the time of *golus*.

"In addition to learning the halachos of *Bein Hametzarim*," the Rebbe says, "both those that apply to the Three Weeks and those specifically to the Nine Days, studied in order to know 'what actions are required to be performed' (as long as Moshiach has still not arrived), and also, more generally, our mourning over the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and our state of *golus*—for as our Sages say, 'Someone who mourns Yerushalayim (in its state of ruin) will merit to see it in its state of joy'—we must also put special emphasis on learning those parts of Torah that focus on *geulah* concepts and on building the third *Beis Hamikdash*, as we have explained many times at length. The essential point is this: the cancellation of the *Churban* and *golus* comes about (not so much by ruminating on the deep and brutal state of *golus* but) primarily through concentrating on the elevated state of *geulah* and through awakening a passionate longing and subsequently, requesting and demanding the future redemption. It is through these efforts that we actually hasten the *geulah*—and even more effectively, for in this process we uncover the true, inner positive aspect of our loss of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the *golus* itself, thereby 'transforming the darkness into light.'"

LAWS OF THE NINE DAYS

Our Sages say, "When the month of Av arrives, we decrease our joy."

"Although the Gemara instructs us," the Rebbe explains,⁷³ "To reduce joyfulness in Av, we nevertheless find this 'reduction' to be limited. We don't reduce **all** joy. Even the month of Av has joyful elements, because joy needs to be constant, as the Torah tells us: 'Serve Hashem with joy,' constantly; even in Av."

AN UNHAPPY SECOND

The Rebbe further encourages us: The *possuk* says that Hashem has "strength and joy in His place." In other words, wherever Hashem is, you'll find joy. It follows, then, that to make a "dwelling place for Hashem (down below)," we must have "strength and joy"—because only when there is both, is it "His place". So, even during times when we are told to "reduce joy", we must still maintain a certain sense of joy.

Why? Since the task of making a home for Hashem applies at all times, as it is the very purpose of our creation (as the Mishnah states, "I was *only* created to serve my Creator"), therefore, we have the constant obligation to fill every single moment of our lives with joy.

Yes, sometimes we must take a different approach, one which contrasts joy ... This is the *avodah* of the month of Av, to "reduce joy", so as to remove the negativity

⁷³) From a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* 5716 (part of the talk is edited and printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol.1, pg. 194 ff)

which sent us into *golus*. But this “reduction” is secondary in our service of Hashem. So the reduction of joy remains extremely limited, for two reasons: Firstly, because in addition to it—and simultaneously—we must have the aspect of joy, and as mentioned, it must be constant, and also, the opposite of joy is not an essential aspect of our *avodah*.

This is the reason Chassidim aren’t “scrupulous” in the performance of the adage to reduce joy, because this temporary decrease in joy only comes second to actual *avodah*.

THEN, A PINCH

“Some very ‘stringent’ people,” the Rebbe tells us,⁷⁴ “take issue with the fact that I am appealing (during this time of year) for joy, because doesn’t it say ‘When Av arrives we reduce our joy?’ So firstly, there are twenty-four, or even thirty-six hours left until the month of Av begins. Moreover, even during the month of Av, the directive is to **reduce** joy—which means to have less joy than in the month of Adar or less than we will have when Moshiach comes—but still, there must be joy!

“How much ‘reduction’ is necessary? We can derive a formula from here: The (Friediker) Rebbe once related that those who struggle to serve Hashem with joy fulfill their obligation to celebrate Simchas Torah by drinking milk (because, halachically, it can be intoxicating) and by pinching their cheek so it appears that they are laughing.

“Now, since the measure of positivity is always greater (than the negative), the requisite ‘reduction’ in joy should be a pinch on the other cheek!”

Torah & Tzedakah

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe quotes the well-known saying which reinterprets the “reduction of joy” during Av—namely, that we “reduce” the negativity of the Nine Days through an **increase** of joy!

Obviously, this refers to joy that is allowed according to halachah. In the Nine Days, this can be achieved through Torah and mitzvos—as it says in Tehillim,⁷⁵ “Hashem’s Orders are just, they cause the heart to rejoice”—and this includes especially *tzedakah*, the giving of which brings joy to a pauper in the most literal sense. Another avenue of permissible joy can be achieved by making public *siyumim* on every day of the Nine Days in every possible location. This joy is generated down here, to the participant in this world, and consequently, brings joy on High.

THE NINE DAYS

TIMING

The halachic restrictions of the Nine Days begin from the eve of Rosh Chodesh Av. They are in effect starting from *shkiah* (sunset), as is the custom, and last until

⁷⁴) From a *sichah* on *Shabbos Parshas Matos Masei*, 5713. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pg. 354.

⁷⁵) 19:9

chatzos (midday) of the 10th of Av. This year, the fast is on Thursday, so bathing, haircuts, and laundry for the sake of Shabbos are allowed on the 10th of Av, even before *chatzos*, as will be outlined in the entry for the 10th of Av below.

Within the Nine Days, there is a period of stricter mourning that applies within the week of *Tishah B'av* itself, as will be outlined below.

A Jew who has an upcoming court case with a non-Jew should endeavor to push it off until Rosh Chodesh Elul, or at least until after *Tishah B'av*, for during this time period our *mazal* is weak.

It is customary to wait until after *Tishah B'av* to recite *Kiddush Levanah*.

BUSINESS & SHOPPING

We are more lenient with regard to conducting business during this period than in previous eras, for usually what is earned nowadays is needed directly to support our families.

It is forbidden to purchase silverware and other expensive household appliances or nice furniture during the Nine Days. The same restriction applies to a car, washing machine/dryer or the like, if its purchase is not an immediate, pressing need.⁷⁶

Basic flatware, dishes, and other necessities are permitted, though the purchase of non-urgent items should wait until after *Tishah B'av*. Comparison shopping (without actually purchasing anything) is also permitted. Window shopping for pleasure should be avoided.

If someone purchased a new piece of furniture prior to Rosh Chodesh Av that arrived during the Nine Days, they should not bring it into the house, or at least shouldn't use it until after *chatzos* on the 10th of Av.

New clothing and shoe purchases are not permitted during the Nine Days. This restriction applies also if they aren't significant items, and even if not buying them will be at a financial loss (such as in the case where an item is on sale), and the intention is to wear the new item only after *Tishah B'av*.

In a case where it's an extraordinary sale that will end before *Tishah B'av*, this particular piece of apparel will need to be purchased regardless, and it is not yet the actual week of *Tishah B'av*, the item may be purchased—especially if it will not be available at all at a later time. But it should not be worn until after the Nine Days, and if possible, should be paid for before Rosh Chodesh.⁷⁷

Gifts may be given in the Nine Days, but not on *Tishah B'av*. Some suggest that a

⁷⁶ Purchasing business-related items of this caliber (like a car for commuting), is within the halachic category of limitations on general business transactions, for which, as mentioned in the halachos, we are lenient.

⁷⁷ There is also room for leniency when purchasing small clothing articles for children under the age of six preceding the week of *Tishah B'av*. See [#748](http://www.asktherav.com).

very expensive gift should not be purchased in the Nine Days; its purchase should be delayed until after *Tishah B'av*.⁷⁸

Mitzvah Articles: It is permitted to purchase new *tefillin* during the Nine Days as they are only used for a mitzvah. It is forbidden, however, to purchase a *tallis* or *tzitzis* since, despite being designated only for a mitzvah, they are considered clothing.⁷⁹

It is permitted to purchase a new yarmulka and *tzitzis* for an *upshernish* boy who turns three during the Nine Days (as mentioned earlier, all traditions associated with turning three apply on his birthday, aside from the haircut itself). However, if possible, it is proper to purchase earlier and get him accustomed to wearing the *tzitzis* before Rosh Chodesh.

Tishah B'av Shoes: You may purchase non-leather shoes to wear on *Tishah B'av* if you do not have them yet. You may even wear them for the first time on *Tishah B'av* itself.

CONSTRUCTION & GARDENING

From Rosh Chodesh Av on, we limit construction that engenders joy, like those in the category of home decoration. This includes any renovations that are not needed to make a home livable; restrictions include building extensions, additions, and any home improvements. Likewise, we do not paint our homes, put up new wallpaper, or purchase or install new carpeting.

Some have the tradition of not washing the floors during the Nine Days, though it is permitted even during the week of *Tishah B'av* itself from a strict halachic perspective. If grime and dirt have accumulated, there is no custom to be stringent, especially if it is done in honor of Shabbos. However, we do not shine floors as it is only for pleasure and not out of necessity, similar to cosmetic renovations.

Building restrictions apply even when using non-Jewish contractors and workers. However, if you contracted the work prior to Rosh Chodesh with an open date for completion after the Nine Days, the non-Jew may work during this time, even on *Tishah B'av* itself, for they are working at that time for their own benefit.

If someone made a contract with a non-Jew to paint their home before the Nine Days, and the painter chooses to do the work during this period, it is also permitted (for the reason mentioned above). Nevertheless, it is praiseworthy, though not required, to try to offer a small compensation for the worker to wait to complete the work after *Tishah B'av*.

⁷⁸ See www.asktherav.com #15828

⁷⁹ If either garment tears, and you have no replacement and cannot borrow or obtain second-hand (or, if they are at hand but you are too particular to don a used garment), you may purchase and wear new to fulfill a mitzvah.

A Jew whose livelihood is in construction is permitted to construct and renovate the home of a non-Jew during the Nine Days.

A shul or *beis midrash* may be constructed or renovated during the Nine Days without restriction. Similarly, you may construct a *ma'akeh* (a fence for a roof, which is a Biblical mitzvah) during this time, even on *Tishah B'av* itself.

A crumbling wall that might collapse may be repaired even if it poses no actual danger and fixing it immediately is only to prevent a more costly repair down the line. Even though this is construction that causes gratification, and not strictly out of necessity, it is permitted, because the main intention is to prevent monetary loss.

During the Nine Days, it is forbidden to plant trees for shade and beauty, or any type of flower or fragrant bush. Watering existing plants is permitted.

It is permitted to purchase flowers for Shabbos, especially if this is a weekly habit.

CELEBRATIONS

It is permitted to get engaged and have a *L'chaim* during the Nine Days, but you may not make a celebratory *seudah* (even on Shabbos).⁸⁰ Only refreshments should be served.

Someone who has experienced a miracle should host a *seudas hoda'ah* (meal of thanks to Hashem) on the anniversary of the day to contemplate and share their rescue story. If the day of the miracle occurred during the Nine Days, it is still a time to recall it and feel gratitude to Hashem, but the *seudah* and celebration should be postponed until *Shabbos Nachamu* or the 15th of Av.

During the Three Weeks, it is the custom not to host a *chanukas habayis* (housewarming), since it is not an auspicious time. During the Nine Days it is halachically forbidden, even if there is no meat on the menu, as such a gathering is included within the restriction of decreased joy.

LAUNDRY

Doing laundry is forbidden during the Nine Days. This also applies to clothing that you don't plan on wearing until after *Tishah B'av*. Laundering is not permitted even if you are traveling immediately after the fast.

There is room for leniency in laundering items to prevent permanent damage to the clothing, like to prevent them from becoming moldy. Washing them, in this instance, isn't detracting from properly mourning the Beis Hamikdash.

We also do not bring clothing to the dry cleaners, despite the fact that the cleaning process is chemical and not water-based.

⁸⁰) It appears that it is likewise forbidden to make any other social party-*seudah* during the Nine Days.

Bed linens, and even handkerchiefs and tablecloths, are included in the prohibition against laundering.

A Jew may not launder the clothing of a non-Jew in the week of *Tishah B'av* (the stricter period within the Nine Days.)

You may not give your clothing to a non-Jewish launderer from Rosh Chodesh and on. However, if it was handed in before Rosh Chodesh, you are not required to warn against washing them during the Nine Days. If you do not have a clean shirt for Shabbos, a non-Jew may wash it for you during the Nine Days; it is better to be careful not to do this in the home of a Jew, to prevent *maris ayin*.

It is forbidden to wash a wig during the Nine Days. If there is a real need, there is room for leniency before the week on *Tishah B'av*. It is permitted to style and comb—even with the assistance of hair products—and trim a wig (especially for *tznius* reasons).

Adults are prohibited from laundering children's clothing, though we can follow a lenient opinion that allows this prior to the week of *Tishah B'av*.⁸¹ However, you may launder the clothing of young children⁸² who are constantly getting dirty throughout the Nine Days. Do so discreetly and restrain from adding any other clothing to the wash. If possible, have a minor child (or a non-Jew) wash the soiled clothing.

This leniency only applies to situations when the clothing is needed for the moment. However, we may not launder clothing that will be put aside for later.

Ironing is likewise forbidden, whether garments are for immediate use or to put away for a later time.

WEARING LAUNDERED CLOTHES

We are prohibited from wearing freshly laundered or ironed clothing during the Nine Days, even if they were laundered before Rosh Chodesh. This also applies to bedding,⁸³ handkerchiefs, tablecloths, and the like.

For medical reasons, such as to prevent an infection, or if not changing the sheets would cause skin irritation, and likewise in hospitals, it is permitted to use freshly laundered sheets.

If the clothing was worn even once before Rosh Chodesh, they are permitted to be worn during the Nine Days themselves.

If someone has no unsoiled clothing, they may wash them up to the week of

81) Up until *Shabbos Chazon* See www.asktherav.com #558.

82) The definition of “young child” in this context: We customarily practice these leniencies up until the age of *chinuch*, which is six years old. If an item is extremely dirty, you can rely on the opinions that are more lenient with children until the age of bar mitzva.

83) In the case of a guest, it is permitted to make a bed with fresh sheets, as no guest is comfortable using linen that someone else has slept in. Towels at the *mikvah*, likewise.

Tishah B'av. In cases of extreme hardship—as opposed to mild discomfort—such as shirts, pants, dresses or the like, that are so soiled that they would cause embarrassment when worn in public, you may launder them (especially a sweat-soaked garment). Wash only what you need at the time—even if you might later need to wash more. Scuff the freshly laundered clothes somewhat (by throwing them on a dirty floor) before wear.

Underclothes: We are customarily more lenient with laundered underclothes and socks and can exchange them when necessary during the Nine Days. This is especially true nowadays, when everyone is particular about these things, and forgoing them would cause hardship. If you run out of clean underclothes, it is better to purchase new and scuff them somewhat by throwing them on the floor than to launder soiled items. If purchasing new is not possible, you may launder just what is needed and subsequently muss them up.⁸⁴

Children: Young children whose clothing requires washing during the Nine Days (see above) are permitted to wear freshly laundered clothing.

Freshly laundered clothing for Shabbos are permitted, like any other Shabbos (but no new clothing). Likewise, a clean tablecloth may be spread. But bed linens may not be changed until after *Tisha B'av*.

Shabbos Clothing: It is forbidden to wear Shabbos clothing during the Nine Days.⁸⁵ At a *bris*, it is customary that the *mohel*, the *sandek*, the woman who brings in the baby,⁸⁶ the parents, grandparents, and other relatives wear Shabbos clothing (if they would wear them at any another time for this relative). Likewise, at a *pidyon haben*—the parents and the *Kohen* wear Shabbos clothing. Halachically, at a *seudah* that takes place on the 13th birthday itself, only the bar mitzvah boy and his parents wear Shabbos clothing.

MEAT & WINE

It is customary not to eat meat or drink wine from Rosh Chodesh until the fast, including Rosh Chodesh itself. Even though this is not a halachic prohibition (to the point that, strictly speaking, meat and wine are not proscribed even the day before the fast, except for *seudah hamafsekes*), it is said that someone who eats meat and drinks wine where the prevailing custom is not to open themselves up to negative ramifications (as the *possuk* says, “one who breaks boundaries, snakes will bite him”⁸⁷).

A sick person (even someone mildly ill, unless it is assured that a dairy diet

84) See [#10223](http://www.asktherav.com). The leniency on purchasing applies only to underclothes. You cannot shop for new clothing, but should launder as indicated above if left without clean clothes.

85) For *shidduch* dating, if you have no other nice clothing available, you can be lenient and wear Shabbos (or even freshly washed) clothing.

86) But the man who brings the baby in and out [called a *kvatter*] and other *mechubadim* (honorees) are not included in this category.

87) Koheles 10:8

will do no harm), also someone who is lactose intolerant, pregnant or nursing a weak child (whose health would be compromised if the mother didn't eat meat), is permitted to eat chicken. If there is no chicken, they may eat meat. Today, when there are many meatless but healthy alternatives, it is preferable to avoid chicken or meat, unless doing so would compromise health. Additionally, by listening in to a *siyum*, they are able to eat meat.

A woman who is within thirty days of giving birth may eat meat and drink wine, if needed. A woman who does so in these circumstances should best to avoid doing so from the 7th to the 9th of Av, but not if there are health concerns.

Someone who made a *brachah* on meat or wine by mistake should eat just a small quantity quickly so that it doesn't become a blessing in vain. This tiny bit does not qualify to add enjoyment during the Nine Days, nor is it considered to have broken the custom of avoiding these foods.

WHAT IS MEAT?

The prohibition to eat meat also includes chicken, cured meats and all dishes cooked with meat.⁸⁸ You may cook pareve food in a *fleishig* pot, even if the pot was used for meat within the last twenty-four hours. You may also eat soup that contains onions cut with a *fleishig* knife.

Children under six years old may eat meat during the Nine Days.

WHAT IS WINE?

The prohibition of drinking wine includes grape juice and foods cooked with wine. Wine vinegar is permitted. Beer is also permitted, as are all other alcoholic beverages (aside from wine).

If needed for medical reasons, you can be lenient and drink wine or grape juice mixed with enough water that the taste of the wine is diluted to the point that, halachically, the *brachah* of *Hagafen* cannot be said on the drink.⁸⁹

We are customarily stringent not to drink the wine for *bentching* on a weekday. Instead, the wine is given to a young child who is capable of making a *brachah*, but has not yet reached the age of following the laws of mourning during the Nine Days. The child should drink a full mouthful. If there is no child present, do not *bentch* over wine. If someone has already *bentched* over a cup of wine, and there is no child present, he should place the cup aside and not drink from it.

Concerning the wine for *Havdalah*, see further, in the halachos of *motzoei Shabbos*.

⁸⁸) If meat mistakenly falls into a cooked dish, it does not invalidate the rest of the food if it is 1/60 or less of the full volume.

⁸⁹) *Shehakol* is said when wine is diluted with water that exceeds 85% of the mixture. A mixed drink with less water would suffice if it can no longer be served as wine to guests. When wine is mixed with other liquids, the non-grape-derived drink should be the majority.

SEUDAS MITZVAH

You are allowed to eat meat and drink wine (including the cup of wine from *bentching*) at a *seudas mitzvah*, like a *bris* (even if it's not on time), *pidyon haben*, *seudas bar mitzvah* (that takes place on the actual birthday of the bar mitzvah boy), and at a *siyum* of a *mesechta*.⁹⁰ This applies only to those who are associated with the event—those who would have attended, as a relative or friend,⁹¹ had the event taken place at a different time of the year. This includes also the women who participate for these reasons, if it is the norm for women to attend. But someone who wants to partake of the food of the *seudas mitzvah* at home may not have wine or meat.⁹² (It should be noted that there are those who do not serve meat or drink wine even at a *seudas mitzvah* during the Nine Days at all, so that the entire population can partake.)

However, the cup of wine used for the *brachos* from the *bris* is given to a child to drink, since this is before the *seudah* commences. If there is no child, the one who made the *brachah* drinks it himself, and it is not given to the baby who has just had the *bris*.

Shechitah: According to the Ramah, the slaughtering knife is put away on Rosh Chodesh Av, as *shechting* is only performed during the Nine Days when it is necessary for a mitzvah, such as for a sick person, Shabbos or *milah* (or *pidyon haben*). However, nowadays, when the majority of Jews live in big cities, which always have people of poor health and women who recently gave birth, and we also need meat to be available for Shabbos, it is no longer customary to shelve the *shechitah* knife.

NAIL TRIMMING

It is permitted to cut your nails during the Nine Days, except during the week of *Tisha b'Av* itself. However, you may cut your nails *lekvod Shabbos*.⁹³

SHOWERING/BATHING

It is forbidden to wash your entire body for pleasure, even with cold water, during the Nine Days. However, you may wash your hands, feet and face and shower with the following restrictions: the water cannot be hot; the showering cannot be for pleasure; and you cannot wash more than half of your body.⁹⁴

If the above protocol is not enough to remove dirt and sweat, it's permissible to wash the entire body, one part at a time. If lukewarm water doesn't do the job,

90) See below for the details of the laws and customs regarding *siyumei masechtos*.

91) However, those who go just to drink, and wouldn't have necessarily gone to the meal otherwise, should not partake, as this falls under the category of a mitzvah that results from an *aveirah*.

92) Within the week of *Tisha B'Av* itself, only a limited *minyan* of men besides the *baalei hasimcha* and close relatives (only those close enough to be invalidated as kosher witnesses) may eat meat and drink wine.

93) For a woman going to the *mikvah* on *motzoei Tishah B'av*, or if someone suspects that his nails might be a *chatzitza* for *netilas yadayim*, nail cutting is permitted even during the week of *Tishah B'av*.

94) Water sprinklers may also be used to cool off in the Nine Days in this manner.

it is permissible to use hot water and even soap to remove profuse sweat and an offensive body odor. Someone who is moderately sweaty but very particular, and not washing would entail great hardship, may also shower to the extent necessary. You should shower discreetly, and not at the public *mikvah*, or the like.

However, a full shower to simply cool off from the hot weather is not warranted during a period when we mourn the tragedy that has befallen the *Beis Hamikdash*. Restrict washing activity to whatever extent possible; even within the above parameters, a *yarei Shomayim* is careful not to take too many leniencies and will change their normal showering habits even to the point of slight discomfort, especially during the week of *Tishah B'av*.

Similarly, swimming in a pool or in the sea is not permitted.⁹⁵

It is permitted to wash, even in hot water, if needed for health—such as a sick person, pregnant woman or a woman who has just given birth.

A man who goes to the *mikvah* regularly before davening is permitted to go during the Nine Days.

For a mitzvah,⁹⁶ you should wash yourself as normal (with hot water and with soap). See later in the section *erev Shabbos Chazon* concerning bathing for Shabbos.

SEWING

We may not sew or alter new clothing, or cobble shoes, in the Nine Days. Although, by the strict definition of halachah, working on old clothing is not proscribed, since it is customary to avoid laundering clothing, this extends to mending them as well. All this only applies to complete alterations, but it is permitted to mend old clothing with small repairs that don't require a professional tailor.

Sewing wedding clothes in honor of a wedding for a groom has no children from a previous marriage⁹⁷ is permitted during the Nine Days. On *Tishah B'av* itself it is permitted as well, if the tailor is not Jewish.

⁹⁵ You can be lenient, if necessary, with children under six years old. However, precautions should be taken because this is a time of *sakanah*, as stated earlier in the halachos of the Three Weeks. Someone who is learning to swim for purposes related to earning a living, and began lessons before the Nine Days but has not completed the course, may go swimming in a lake even after Rosh Chodesh, since this is career-oriented and not for pleasure. Nevertheless, in both these circumstances, it is certainly best to be stringent.

⁹⁶ This applies to a woman who needs to use the *mikvah*—she prepares herself as normal with hot water and then immerses. Even if she is visiting the *mikvah* on *motzoei Tisha B'Av*, she may still wash herself on *erev Tisha B'Av*, and then complete her preparations after the fast is over. (In this case, she should be careful of *chatzitzah* from the time she finishes bathing—like not walking barefoot so that dirt and other substances don't stick to her soles.)

The limitations on bathing are also suspended if she must make a *hefsek taharah* during the Nine Days; she may wash the prescribed areas as normal.

⁹⁷ In halachic sources, (and at times and in places where polygamy is legal) this dispensation also does not apply to marriages where the groom has children from his other wife.

A Jewish tailor or cobbler may not create new apparel for others, whether commissioned or free. Even if the work is for a non-Jew, it is forbidden (because of how it appears to the common observer), unless it's public knowledge that the work is for non-Jews. If the Jew needs the work to pay for basic necessities such as food, he is permitted even if it's not public knowledge that it's for a non-Jew. There are leniencies that may be applied in this case, even for a Jew, if the work was commissioned before Rosh Chodesh.

There are leniencies for alterations commissioned via a non-Jewish tailor if the clothing was handed in before Rosh Chodesh and ordered to be ready for after the fast. But it is best to avoid this situation when possible.

Weaving: Traditionally, women avoid warping their looms (tying the foundational threads) on account of mourning at this time when the *even hashetsiya* (the foundation stone of the world, which lived in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash*) was nullified.⁹⁸ Other similar practices in cloth-making are also restricted, such as knitting and crocheting. Spinning thread is permitted as it isn't related to weaving. Weaving with twigs (caning) or lanyard crafts⁹⁹ are also allowed, because they are not related to clothing fabrication at all.

SIYUMIM

The Rebbe says¹⁰⁰: Please publicize everywhere possible and inspire others about the *minhag* of having *siyumim* on each of the Nine Days¹⁰¹ in order to add in the joy of Torah in a permissible manner. In this way, we will nullify those matters that are contrary to joy.

Since the effects of the 9th of Av last until the 15th of Av it is suggested that, should Moshiach be, G-d forbid, delayed, the *siyumim* should continue during the remaining days until—and including—the 15th of Av.

"Through arranging a 'completion' (*siyum*) in Torah," the Rebbe explains,¹⁰² "we cause a 'completion' within all other matters in the world, including and most importantly, the completion of Exile. In fact, the appropriate term truly is the *completion* of Exile and not its nullification, for we are referring to the (positive) conclusion and completeness of the Exile itself, which is wrought by drawing the א (Alef—i.e., Hashem, the Master [Aluf] of the Universe) into the Exile. We thus transform Exile (*golah*—גולה) into Redemption (*geulah*—גאולה)."

SIYUM PARTICIPANTS

We should expend effort to ensure that the *siyumim* will draw a great

98) Girls learning to sew, weave, knit, or crochet should not continue their lessons during the Nine Days. Summer camps should also restrict these activities. However, for health reasons, i.e., an ill woman who embroiders (or needlepoints, or similar) to calm her nerves, it is allowed even during the Nine Days.

99) also called "scoubidou" or "boondoggle"

100) *Sichas Parshas Devarim*, 5751. In *Hisvaduyos* p.96

101) "and also regarding the *siyum* of the Rambam that will take place during this time this year (in 5751)"

102) *Sichas 5 Menachem Av*, 5748. In *Hisvaduyos* p.108

attendance. Both men and women should attend these *siyumim*—seated separately, of course—as well as children.

Customarily, everyone gathers around the person conducting the *siyum* before he has recited the *siyum* of the *mesechta*, and he completes it in their presence. Everyone listens and joins in his *siyum*, and then has a *seudah*.

TZEDAKAH & FARBRENGEN

The *siyum* should be associated with the giving of *tzedakah*. On Shabbos, give spiritual *tzedakah* (forms of lovingkindness that are permitted), and then after Shabbos, give physical *tzedakah* as well.¹⁰³

It is good to combine the *siyum* (where appropriate) with a *seudah* and *farbrengen*. The Rebbe Rashab had the *minhag* to “make *siyumim*” during the Nine Days, despite the fact that he wouldn’t have a *seudah* afterward with meat and wine.

SIYUM MENU

It is permitted to eat meat and drink wine at the *seudah* of a *siyum*, if the attendees would have taken part out of friendship had this *siyum* taken place any other time.¹⁰⁴

There are those who practice, as did the Rebbe Rashab, not to eat meat or drink wine during the Nine Days, even when participating in a *siyum*. This is to preclude the need to decide from among the various and conflicting halachic opinions regarding the particular types of *siyumim*, and whether they qualify for a *seudas mitzvah* with wine and meat that override the mourning practices of the Nine Days. Among these questions are: Does the allowance apply to a *siyum* that is being made especially for the Nine Days, and if not for the desire for a dining dispensation, would have been held earlier or later? Who can enjoy this meal—anyone who participates, or only those who would show up for this learner’s *siyum* on any other day of the year? What is the normal practice of the *siyum*-maker—does he generally have a meal following completion of a *mesechta*? Is it enough if it is usually a light meal, or does he specifically have to have a tradition of serving wine and meat? What if the person has no history to bank on, since he only makes *siyumim* during the Nine Days altogether? While the halachic consensus is that meat and wine are allowed in most circumstances, many choose to serve only fish and beverages other than wine at these events.

103) A hand-written note from the Rebbe states: “Enjoin Anash who participate in the *siyumim*, that every *siyum* conclude with an announcement that calls to (increase in) giving *tzedakah*—in addition to earlier suggestion that every *siyum* conclude with words on the theme of *Ahavas Yisrael*.”

104) See above in the section of halachos of eating meat and drinking wine. In the week of *Tisha B’Av* itself, it is permissible to eat meat only with a *minyan* of men besides relatives who are related closely enough to be invalidated as kosher witnesses.

IN PERSON

According to the letter of the law, joining a *siyum* via radio, telephone, or other virtual means is considered taking part, even for the intent of being able to eat meat and drinking wine, if this participant would have joined during another time out of friendship to the person making the *siyum*. However, it is preferable to join in person.

If someone walks into a *seudah* that followed a *siyum*, is he considered a participant regarding eating meat and drinking wine? Or, the opposite situation: if someone listened in on the *siyum* but did not partake in the *seudah*, may they eat meat later at home? In practice, we can be lenient in these matters during the Nine Days¹⁰⁵ and even having partaken of only one aspect suffices.

SIYUM CRITERIA

Someone who completed a *mesechta* from beginning to end, previously, but hasn't yet conducted a *siyum* (with the associated practices, including recitation of "Hadran..."), it is proper to make a celebration, but this is not considered an actual *siyum* and eating meat and drinking wine are not permitted.

A *siyum* on a *mesechta* of Mishnayos (preferably learned with at least one commentary, such as the Bartenura) qualifies as a celebration worthy of serving meat at the accompanying meal. Nevertheless, it is better to conduct the *siyum* on a *mesechta* (and not just a *perek*) of Gemara, so that the *siyum* satisfies all halachic criteria, or on one complete book in the Rambam's Mishneh Torah, or the like.¹⁰⁶

Someone who took part in a Gemara shiur and completed an entire *mesechta* may conduct a *siyum*, even though he has not learned the *mesechta* inside. This is because the main point of studying the Oral Torah is comprehension, and not the wording.

Our custom is that following a *siyum* we say *Kaddish D'rabanan* and not the *Kaddish* that is printed at the end of a *mesechta*.

WEDNESDAY, ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM AV

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of Aharon Hakohen.¹⁰⁷

THE MOON GROWS

"In some respects, Rosh Chodesh is considered a Yom Tov," the Rebbe says,¹⁰⁸ "as it

¹⁰⁵) Not so on *erev Pesach*. A firstborn must participate in the *siyum* in order to have dispensation to break his fast.

¹⁰⁶) See www.asktherav.com #5039

¹⁰⁷) As described in this week's *parshah*, Bamidbar 33:38. Regarding today's significance, see *Sichas Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av* 5735, 5741 and 5751; *Shabbos Mevorchim Menachem Av* 5739, among others.

¹⁰⁸) From a *sichah* on Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, 5749

is the greatest and most special day of the month. In addition, Rosh Chodesh is the root and source, and therefore contains, all the days of the month.

“Regarding Rosh Chodesh Av, there is extra special significance to the ‘Yom Tov’ as this fifth month includes the ‘fifth fast day’ (of the ones associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*) that is destined to be transformed into a day of happiness, joy, and a Yom Tov, as will all the fast days. And since this fast represents the greatest descent, it’s self-understood that, after the transformation, it will represent the greatest ascent—it will be the greatest Yom Tov of them all.

“Moreover, the month of Av includes the advantageous day of the 15th of Av, a day that the Gemara calls the greatest of all Yomim Tovim. And because the greatness of the 15th of Av stems from it being the day that the moon shines to its fullest, this advantage already begins from Rosh Chodesh, the day of the *molad* (the birth of this month’s moon). In other words, the start of the moon’s ultimate perfection is from the moment it begins to wax, on Rosh Chodesh. So the advantage of the 15th of Av as the greatest Yom Tov can already be felt on Rosh Chodesh Av.”

HALLEL, HOW?

On a Rosh Chodesh Av, the Rebbe says¹⁰⁹: (Today) Rosh Chodesh Av, we say *Hallel*. *Hallel* is connected with the concept of revelation, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Likkutei Torah*¹¹⁰: The word *Hallel* is etymologically related to the *possuk* from *Iyov*, “*B’hilo neiro* —(Hashem) lit His candle”, the concept of “light”, revelation. Now, seemingly, the revelation of Hashem’s light and the events of the month of Av contradict each other. Nevertheless, we do say *Hallel* on this Rosh Chodesh, same as on every other one, to bring these two opposing ideas together. We can transform the darkness of the negative aspects of this month themselves to become light and revelation. We know this from the *possuk* in *Koheles*,¹¹¹ “Wisdom is greater than foolishness, just like light is greater than darkness.”—and an alternate reading is: “... the light that emerges from within the darkness is greater...” This transformation is possible on the level, as it says in *Tehillim*,¹¹² “Night will be lit up like the day”, and all darkness, *golus*, and negativity will be gone forever.

More on this vein, from 5741: Rosh Chodesh comes with lots of joy, for it is a day on which we recite *Hallel*. *Hallel* is recited only on a day of great happiness, a special time of celebration, as we can see from the Gemara concerning the ill-advised conduct of a person who says it every day—the daily grind is not *Hallel*-worthy.

However, when such an opportunity of joy does arise, and we fail to say *Hallel*, that too is inappropriate—as the Gemara also says regarding King Chizkiyahu, who was punished because he did not properly praise Hashem for the miracles wrought to him. The same applies to today, Rosh Chodesh Av. Not only is Rosh Chodesh not a regular workday, it is a day we say *Hallel*, a special time of joy!

109) From a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5737

110) *Parshas Tzav* 14:4.

111) 2:13

112) 139:12

This is actually a novel idea, surprising, as we find ourselves in the time of *Bein Hametzarim*, and on the first of the (even more difficult) Nine Days. And nevertheless, we say Hallel, an act of celebration and joy!

ALL ABOUT AV

In various *sichos*, the Rebbe explains different meanings of the name "Menachem Av".

"Av" represents Hashem's fundamental relationship with Yidden, the essential love of a father (*av*, in Hebrew) to a child, coupled with the descriptor "Menachem" (comforting), so He is the Father who comes and uncovers the essential love, thereby soothing the pain of *golus*.

The idea of comfort (in contrast to other types of emoting) is that it is transformational, exchanging one extreme for another, not a steady rise or a gradual change. The word "Menachem" is also etymologically connected to "regret" (for the past), and also draws a connection to the ultimate change in our state of *golus*—Moshiach, for "His name is Menachem", as it says in Gemara Sanhedrin. This cathartic comfort begins not only after the terrible events of this month (after *Tishah B'av*) but already from Rosh Chodesh.

Who offers this comfort? Hashem Himself, the Parent Who is described as both "Merciful Father" and "Father of Mercy"—the very source of *rachmanus*. In the name of the month, "Menachem" precedes "Av", comfort becoming His primary role, (and canceling out the negative aspects) to the point that in certain places when the name of the month is shortened, it is merely called "Menachem."

Chassidus explains that "Av" represents such an elevated level of mercy that it is above all of *sefer hishtalshelus* (the chain-like contraction and containment of the Divine Light, which is the process of creating the higher and nether worlds). Through the precursor of "Menachem", this lofty mercy can fulfill its purpose and be experienced.

Another aspect of the order of the words is that it can take on the meaning that it is the "Comforting of the Father (Himself)!" Hashem, too, is affected by *golus* on a deep and essential level, for we, His children, are in a state of being a lowly and downtrodden nation. Where does His comfort come from? Through these very children, despite our being so cast down! But the power to do this also from the Father—that notwithstanding our current situation, we contain within us His very essence (the *neshamah*).

On the other hand, in terms of the order of the words, we can view "Menachem" as the starting act, and once we're reached this considerable accomplishment, we top it off with "Av", the comfort being bolstered yet more, in tune with the *possuk* from Tehillim,¹¹³ "Like a father's mercy"—experiencing Hashem's Mercy of the Highest Levels.

These specific *sichos* expound on this particular topic:

In 5730¹¹⁴: “A custom of the Jewish people is (also) Torah,” the Rebbe quotes. “So there is much significance in the fact that this month is customarily called ‘Menachem Av’, as we see from the laws of contracts and wedding *kesubos*. There are some instances where people refer to this month by the shortened term ‘Menachem’. And it is acceptable! Even according to those halachic opinions that its official name is plain ‘Av’, if a document is dated with only ‘Menachem’ it is still legitimate, for it is common enough in all Jewish communities that the name ‘Menachem’ is recognizable as referring to the month of ‘Av’.

“Now, since this practice is something that has been publicized among *Yidden*, it is clear that this is a concept that applies to *Yiddishkeit* broadly, since halachic documents and contracts affect *Yidden* specifically. So there is, for each of us, the possibility of relating to this month simply ‘Menachem’, which means comfort (and not by its more negative aspects). And as we say when we officially bless the new month (using both names), we say ‘Menachem’ before ‘Av’, and the comfort achieves a status of being the leader; it is first not only chronologically, but also in its meaning, since this (added name to the month) is connected with Torah (and halachah), for which value is related to quality over quantity.”

In 5707¹¹⁵: The name of this month is “Av”, as is written on a *gett*, but on a *kesubah* and when we bless the new month we say “Menachem Av”. We can explain this according to what it says in Chassidus: the magnitude of a father’s love for his son is apparent when he is disciplining him (even though the son is not feeling it at the moment), which is the state of *Yidden* in *golus*. We are then likened to a divorced wife, like it says in the Gemara Yuma. This is why a *gett* written at this time is dated “Av” (which connotes “Father”, but the great love is hidden). However, our desire and our plea is that this love should be actually revealed. Therefore when we make a blessing on the month, and also when we write a *kesubah* that has the sole purpose to strengthen the marriage (the exact opposite of divorce) —at these times we emphasize the “Menachem” aspect of this month.

A DAY FOR MOSHIACH

“Every Rosh Chodesh the spark of Moshiach, also known as the *Yechidah* in every Jew’s soul (which is a spark of the general *Yechidah*—the soul of Moshiach) is revealed.

The revelation of this spark resonates and causes a rejuvenation in the entire being of every Jew, so that everything they do is permeated with the level of *Yechidah*, and, most importantly, through this we cause the revelation and arrival of Moshiach in the most literal sense—that a king from the house of David (arises, one who is) a soul in body etc.”¹¹⁶

114) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*

115) *Roshei Devarim* of a *sichah* on *Shabbos Mevorchim Menachem Av*, recorded by the Rebbe in *Igros Kodesh*, vol 2, p. 213

116) *Sichah* of *Parshas Toldos* 5752

BE HAKHEL HAPPY

On Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, 5748,¹¹⁷ which was a Hakhel year, the Rebbe said: The *possuk* in Eichah,¹¹⁸ *kara elai Mo'ed* ("He called upon me an assembly") refers to the day of Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, and from here stems the precedent for referring to every Rosh Chodesh as a *Mo'ed*. (As it is the source of this designation), Rosh Chodesh Av is obviously more closely connected with this concept, and never more than this year: Hakhel—when the aspects of *Mo'ed* associated with "joy" and "assembly" are at the fore.

PRAYERS

Yaaleh ve'yavo is recited in the *Amidah* and in *Birchas Hamazon*. If you forgot, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

When saying the brachah *Me'ein Shalosh* (for items requiring *al hamichya*, the seven fruits or wine), the proper wording for today is: *Vezechreinu l'tovah b'yom Rosh Hachodesh hazeh*. If you forget, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

In Shacharis, half-*Hallel*¹¹⁹ is recited, then *V'avraham zaken*, *Kaddish tiskabel*, *Shir shel Yom (revi'i bashabbos)*, *Hoshi'einu*, *Barchi nafshi*, and *Kaddish Yasom*, followed by the reading of the Torah.

KRIAS HATORAH

Four *aliyos* are read in the Rosh Chodesh reading (**Kohen**—until *olah tamid*, **Levi**—reread the verse of *V'amarta lahem* until *revi'is hahin*, **Shlishi**—until *veniska*, and **Revi'i**—*Uv'roshei chadsheichem* until *venisko*.)

The Torah reading is followed by half-*Kaddish*; *hagbah* and *gelilah*; *Ashrei* and *Uva letziyon*—the *chazzan* does not conclude *Uva letziyon* aloud. That is followed by *Yehalelu* and the return of the Torah to the *aron*. The *tefillin* are then removed, *Rabbeinu Tam tefillin* are donned and then removed before continuing with Musaf.

The *chazzan* should recite a chapter of Tehillim before beginning half-*Kaddish* for Musaf.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: IN THE BEIS HAMIKDASH TODAY

We offer the following *korban musaf* in the *Beis Hamikdash* in honor of Rosh Chodesh: two bulls, one ram, seven lambs as burnt-offerings, and one goat for a sin-offering. These are in addition to the daily *korban tamid*.

We will all ascend to the *Beis Hamikdash* in Yerushalayim—not just three times a year, for Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos, but also for each Shabbos and for each *Rosh Chodesh* (as it says in Navi¹²⁰).

117) שנת תשמ"ח (Year of 5748) can be read as "A year to *Tismach* (rejoice) and/or *Tisamach* (make happy)", a theme the Rebbe repeated often that year.

118) 1:15

119) Does one make a brachah on half-*Hallel* if davening without a *minyan*? See [#2750](http://www.asktherav.com)

120) *Yeshayah* 10:23

ROSH CHODESH CUSTOMS

It is a mitzvah to enhance the quality of our meals on Rosh Chodesh.

It is an ancient custom that on each Rosh Chodesh we study one verse of the chapter of Tehillim that corresponds with the current years of a person's life. The verse should be studied with the commentary of Rashi, and additional commentaries may be added as well. If the current chapter contains less than twelve verses, or in a leap year, when there are more than twelve months, verses that have been studied on a previous Rosh Chodesh should be studied a second time. Similarly, if the current chapter contains many verses, then two or three verses should be studied at once on each Rosh Chodesh of the year.

FRIDAY, 3 MENACHEM AV - EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS DEVARIM

SHABBOS PREPS

Shnayim mikra is recited for this week's *parshah*, *Parshas Devarim*. Men use the *mikvah*, as is customary every *erev Shabbos*.

Exchange your weekday attire for Shabbos clothes, as is customary on every *Shabbos Chazon*. You may dress for Shabbos at any time past *chatzos* (midday at **1:02 pm**), as you would do any *erev Shabbos*. The same applies to setting the Shabbos table with a clean tablecloth. There is no need to wait until right before Shabbos.

You may shower with hot water and soap in honor of Shabbos and clip your fingernails.

FLEISHIGS

To adjust seasoning, as much is necessary, you may taste *fleishig* Shabbos dishes by swishing the food in your mouth, without swallowing.

You may also feed young children *fleishigs* within an hour or two of Shabbos even if they are above the age of *chinuch* (six years old), if they are accustomed to having a "dinner hour" on a long *erev Shabbos* and not waiting until the post-Maariv meal late at night.

Light candles today at **8:03pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

SHABBOS PARSHAS DEVARIM - SHABBOS CHAZON

On this day, Nechemia and those who went up to Eretz Yisrael with him began to build the walls of Yerushalayim.

SHABBOS CHAZON

It is from the *Haftorah* that this Shabbos gets its name: *Shabbos Chazon*, and it means "Shabbos of Vision". The inner meaning of what we behold on this Shabbos is explained with the well-known statement of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev,

quoted by Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, that on *Shabbos Chazon*, “each and every Jewish person is shown the future *Beis Hamikdash* from afar.”

Reb Levi Yitzchok explains this with the following parable: *A father had a precious garment made for his beloved son. The father then gave this garment to his son to wear, but the son was careless and eventually caused the garment to be torn to shreds.*

The father then made his son a second such garment, which the son soon brought to the same tattered state.

What did the father do then? He made a third garment but did not give it to his son to wear; he instead concealed the garment, and only at specific intervals he would display it to his son—telling him that should he conduct himself correctly, he will be allowed to wear this wonderful garment...

The reason for this vision is to arouse a stirring for the third *Beis Hamikdash* within each of us. That, in turn, causes a closer and deeper adherence to Torah and mitzvos, and an awareness that doing so causes Hashem to physically grant us the future *Beis Hamikdash* all the sooner.

In many *sichos*, the Rebbe explains deeper meanings of this vision. The Rebbe also encourages us to publicize this teaching of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev in his name.¹²¹

On that occasion, the Rebbe also says that someone who claims (or is under the impression) that they do not see these visions, they should be aware that it is merely due to the concealment caused by their *yetzer hara*, or similar, which does not alter the true reality that they are shown this vision. This is because the *mazal* of a Jew's *neshamah* (i.e., the root of the soul that remains in the upper realms) sees this vision, and influence from the *mazal* then flows into the part of the soul that resides within the body, affecting the *neshamah* that is inside and even the body itself!

Kabbalas Shabbos: We sing *Lecha Dodi* in the manner of every other Shabbos during the year—and even with added *simchah*.¹²²

SHACHARIS

Men who are accustomed to visiting the *mikvah* each *Shabbos* morning may do so on this *Shabbos*.

A mnemonic device for the order of the *parshios* at this time is *Tzumu V'Tzulu*:

121) Parshas Devarim 5749: The teaching and parable of Reb Levi Yitzchak is brought in the teachings of Reb Hillel of Paritch, who passed away on the eleventh of Menachem Av 5624.

Parshas Devarim 5748: The very act of publicizing a teaching in the name of its original author is itself bound with the Redemption – for “All who state a matter in the name of its author brings redemption to the world.”

This was revealed specifically through Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (see Likkutei Sichos, vol. 9, p. 30) whose theme was to affect the redemption of the Jews from both their individual exiles and also from their general Exile. This is even alluded to in his name ‘Levi Yitzchak’... (Parshas Devarim 5749). Many of his explanations reveal the inner goodness that is to be found within words of rebuke.

122) As usual: See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos* 5714 (*Sichos Kodesh*, p. 363 ff). With added joy: See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5733. Excerpts of both *sichos* appear under the entry for *Shabbos Mevorchim Menachem Av* in Part 1 of the Day-to-Day Guide.

“Fast and (then) pray”, so *Tishah B’av* precedes *Parshas V’eschanan* (“And I beseeched Hashem...”) each year. This is apropos for reading *Parshas Devarim*, which is the start of Moshe’s rebuke, before *Tishah B’av*, and that topic coinciding with the *Haftorah* of *Chazon*, the *navi* Yeshayahu’s rebuke concerning the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

According to *Sefer Haminhagim*, the *Kohen’s aliyah* should stop one *possuk* earlier than indicated, so that the second *aliyah* should not begin with the word “*Eichah*” (the same opening word to the *megillah* of mourning the *Churban* read on *Tishah B’av*). However, for quite a few years, this has not been the practice in 770.

EICHAH 2.0

The Rebbe explains¹²³: In the future time of Moshiach there will be a transformation of the *Eichah* of the second *aliyah* of *Parshas Devarim*. Moshe *Rabbeinu’s* complaint of “*Eichah—Oy!* How can I alone carry (your burdens)?” will become instead, an appreciation: Moshe (who is our first and last redeemer) will look at the multitudes of *Yidden*, including those from all previous generations who return with the Revival of the Dead, and exclaim, “Wow! Look how I alone carry...”

The *Maftir* (and *Haftorah* reading) is dignified with the reading by the Rav or another important leader of the community. The tune of the *Haftorah* is the same as the rest of the year.

WHAT SINS?

On a few occasions, the Rebbe quotes Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in reinterpreting the verses of this *Haftorah* (not as rebuke but) in a favorable light. For example, the *possuk*, *am keved avan*, “a nation whose sins are heavy” would instead read: “a nation for whom (even the concept of) sinning is difficult”—because they do not have the temperament or scope for it, it is a challenge to understand the concept of sin, even concerning one errant thought.

Av Harachamim is recited after reading the Torah.

The Nine-Day *siyum* initiative includes Shabbos as well. The *siyum* should then be celebrated with a festive meal.

The chapter of *Pirkei Avos* for this week is *Perek Beis*.

Shabbos ends at **9:09pm**.

Even once Shabbos is over, if you haven’t yet davened Maariv with a *minyan*,¹²⁴ you may continue to eat meat and drink wine. This is because it’s still considered Shabbos for you (and you still add *Retzei* to *bentching*).

¹²³ *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5743

¹²⁴ If you are davening without a *minyan*, and the majority of locals have already said Maariv, you must abstain, even if you didn’t yet daven yourself.

HAVDALAH

We make *Havdalah* over a cup of wine and give it to a young boy to drink—one who has reached the age of *chinuch* regarding brachos, but has not yet reached the age of mourning over Yerushalayim. Have in mind to be *motzie* the boy with *borei pri hagafen*. He should drink at least a full mouthful (his own). If there is no child, the person making *Havdalah* can drink the wine himself.

If you made the brachah on the wine with the intention of giving it to the little boy to drink, but he refused it, you must make a brachah of *borei pri hagafen* again to drink it yourself.

Melaveh Malkah, the meal of *Dovid malka moshicha*: Even those who customarily eat meat as part of *melaveh malkah* every *motzoei Shabbos*, should not eat meat during the Nine Days.¹²⁵

SUNDAY, 5 AV

Today is the *yahrtzeit-hilula* of the Arizal, referred to in sources as *Arizal Hachai* (living). His *hilula* was in the year 5332.

In the beginning of the *Hayom Yom*, one of the Rebbe's innovations are stated as follows: "In the year 5736 (a spur is on) to add in giving *tzedakah* before davening (Shacharis and Minchah) in connection with the auspicious day of the 5th of Av, the passing of the Arizal, along with inspiration to add in learning the the Arizal's Torah."

In many talks and letters, the Rebbe encourages us to learn from Arizal's conduct. This day (of his *yahrtzeit*) is an opportunity to meditate on his ways. The fact that his actions are knowable to the public, along with stories that even children can learn from, is proof that it is applicable to us and we are obligated to direct *Yiddishe* children in his manner.

The direction we should take is both in matters of 'justice', which refers to learning Torah, as well as '*tzedakah*' (as in the *possuk* from *Navi*: "Tzion will be redeemed with justice and returned with *tzedakah*"). Especially, we must add, with even more strength, in learning the inner aspect of Torah, which is the Arizal's forte, and with regard to performing mitzvos, also according to the Arizal's teachings. Doing so will effect change not only qualitatively (through comprehending unrealized depth) but also quantitatively (by inspiring us to do more).

The same applies to the second aspect, '*tzedakah*'. Both these ideas (learning and giving) were especially emphasized by the Arizal. These he performed with no limitations, without a speck of miserliness—for he would place his hand in his pocket and remove a fistful of coins to give away for *tzedakah*, or to pay for a mitzvah-item, without ever counting what he'd retrieved.

These can be much enhanced with other lessons of the Arizal's life.

125) Bypassing their custom during the Nine Days does not require *hataras nedarim*.

Simchah shel mitzvah: It is said that he merited Divine inspiration (*ruach hakodesh*) on account of his joy in fulfilling mitzvos.

Ahavas Yisroel: His commitment to love his fellow Jew—indeed, it is his directive that led to the addition of the introductory statement of “*Hareini mekabel...ve’ahavta l’reiacha kamocha*” before *tefillah*.

Hafatzas Hama’ayanos: The revelation of the inner aspect (*pnimius*) of Torah began with the Arizal. In fact this was his entire mission, which will culminate in the coming of Moshiach, as recorded in the Baal Shem Tov’s letter to his brother-in-law: “I entered the chamber of Moshiach (on High) and asked, ‘Master, when are you coming?’ (and he answered:) “When your wellsprings spread forth to the outside.”

According to different directives over the years, it has become the custom for a group effort to learn from the Arizal’s Torah, daven, and give tzedakah at his gravesite—and all over the world in honor of his *yahrtzeit/hilula*.

LAW OF THE REDEMPTION: DOVID’S PROGENY

Specific families merited to donate wood annually for use on the altar, as described in *Meseches Ta’anis*.¹²⁶ On the 5th of Menachem Av (and on the first of Teves), the family of Parosh, son of Yuda, donated wood. They were descendents of Dovid Hamelech.

TUESDAY, 7 MENACHEM AV

BREECH NUMBER 2,445

On this date, the Rebbe explains: When the Gemara reminds us that the 7th of Av is the day that “outsiders entered the *Heichal*”, the intention is not, *chas v’shalom*, to bring us pain and anguish. The *Chachamim* would be extra careful to avoid causing such a reaction with regard to small details, so how much more so is this true of a national tragedy, one that, when we take into account that there is a (spiritual) recurrence of the event every anniversary, the outsiders have infiltrated over 1900 times!

What the Gemara does intend is to fire us up in redoubling our efforts, through our service of Hashem, to bring the *geulah* and the rebuilding of the third *Beis Hamikdash* that much quicker. This is, in addition to the special efforts that are engendered by having come through the Three Weeks, and subsequent to that, the more concentrated effort that ensued when we reached the more serious period of the Nine Days, starting from Rosh Chodesh Av, which intensifies even more the closer we get to *Tishah B’av*... until we reach the 7th of Av, the day that the outsiders breached the *Beis Hamikdash* and entered its holy chamber.

It states in the Midrash concerning the phenomenon of the *Churban*, that “*Ari* (a lion, referring to Nevuchadnezzar, who is compared to a lion in Navi Yirmiyahu) rose up and destroyed (the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is called, in the Navi Yeshayahu) *Ariel*, in order that (one day) the *Ari* (Hashem, Who is compared to a lion in the Navi Amos) will come and rebuild *Ariel*.”

The lesson regarding (the general events) of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* is applied also to the event of this particular day: At the times when we recall the tragedies “for these days recur and are remembered every year”¹²⁷ and we realize that another year has gone by; another day, and yet an additional day is gone, and still “we have not merited (the *geulah*)”, and this day that has passed is not just a regular day in *golus*, but it is a day on which some particular terrible event occurred—in this case, the 7th of Av, when “outsiders breached the *Heichal*”, we must recognize that this is, to quote the Midrash, “**in order that**” *Yidden* should be given an extra boost of strength and reinforcement to make a deep, personal remonstrance from the depths of the heart that we’ve had enough! It is past time for the actual fulfillment of the promise that the “*Ari* (Hashem) will rebuild *Ariel*”, the construction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, with the true and complete Redemption through the coming (the son of) Dovid, *Melech Hamoshiach*!

WEDNESDAY, 8 MENACHEM AV - EREV TISHAH B’AV

RESTRICTIONS

We do not take leisurely walks on *erev Tishah B’av*.

We abstain from studying Torah, barring those subjects that are permissible on *Tishah B’av* itself, from *chatzos* (midday, **1:02 pm**) the day before to the extent that it is possible. (See the parameters of this limitation further on, in the section on the restrictions of *Tishah B’av*.)

For this reason, it is important to make sure to finish all regularly-scheduled sessions (including the *Chitas* and Rambam daily *shiur*) before *chatzos*; if you neglected to do so, you may complete them until *shkiah*.

FIRST SEUDAH

The Ramah states that it is a *minhag* to eat a pre-fast meal prior to davening Minchah, increasing our food intake over the usual to ease the fast. An additional reason for this meal is sourced¹²⁸ as a commemoration of the *seudah* held when *Tishah B’av* was observed as a *Yom Tov* in the days of the second *Beis Hamikdash* (the rebuilding that followed its first destruction on this day), and with the hope that imminently, we will celebrate this day again with the rebuilding of the third *Beis Hamikdash*.

Minchah: We daven earlier than usual to leave ample time for the second meal—the *seudah hamafsekes*. The earliest time to daven is at **1:37 pm** (*Minchah Gedolah*). We do not say *Tachanun* this afternoon, for *Tishah B’av* is referred to as *Mo’ed* (destined to a *Yom Tov*).¹²⁹

¹²⁷) Megillah 9:28

¹²⁸) As brought by the Magen Avraham

¹²⁹) In the compilation of the Alter Rebbe’s *Ma’amarim Haketzarim* (p. 564), a *maamar* delivered on *erev Tishah B’av* (a weekday) at the *seudah* is recorded. The Rebbe mentions this *ma’amar* in the *sichah* of *Parshas*

SEUDAH HAMAFSEKES MENU

After Minchah on *erev Tishah B'av*, we eat a meal of “intermission” (*mafsekkes*). This meal is attended even by those who will not fast for whatever reason.

To indicate that we are entering a period of mourning, we do not eat more than one cooked food at this meal. For those who have the custom to eat an egg dipped in ashes (also a sign of mourning), this would be considered a cooked item, and they should not prepare any additional cooked dishes for this meal.

The definition of “two cooked foods” includes a single type of dish that was divided and cooked to different consistencies, or even two types of food that are cooked together in one pot.¹³⁰ Soup, though it is prepared from various vegetables and other ingredients, is permitted.

Even foods that may be eaten raw are counted as a cooked item (if cooked), and “cooked” includes preparations such as broiled, smoked, or fried. However, bread is not included. Spices and flavorings may also be added to the prepared food.

Some halachic authorities consider coffee “cooked” in this regard, and even pasteurized milk or other dairy products that have undergone heat preparation. However, others give leeway for drinks—that they should not be considered “food” at all, and, additionally, since these drinks have become so ubiquitous in society, they have lost their status as gourmet fare. Practically, someone who can suffice with water at this meal should do so, though other drinks are allowed in moderation, with the exception of tea and coffee (unless deemed necessary).

Fruits and vegetables may be eaten raw—even different types, though food consumption at this meal should not be for pleasure, so salads or extra fruit varieties that fall into this category, including dessert-grade, should be avoided.

Throughout the Nine Days, we are accustomed to avoid meat and wine (including its drinkable byproducts), but at this meal they are expressly forbidden halachically—as well as all alcoholic drinks. Many avoid fish now as well.

We do not eat cucumber pickles and other brined or pickled foods at this meal.

It is brought in *sefarim* to avoid eating licorice root (the naturally growing vegetable, not the artificially flavored candy) on *erev Tishah B'av*. Since it leaves a sweet residue in the mouth, a person will continue to ingest it during the fast when they swallow their saliva.

Ve'eschanan 5725, and adds that it's not clear whether it was at the first meal or the *seudah hamafsekkes*. See Hebrew footnote for details.

¹³⁰ A regular recipe for which you always add an additional food for flavoring (for example, risotto, mac and cheese, or shakshuka)—the extra ingredient is not considered a separate food. However, for someone who would, at times, eat the main food plain (rice, pasta or fried eggs), the additions would be considered a second cooked item.

CONDUCTING THE SEUDAH

For this meal we sit on a low chair not more than three *tefachim* (about nine to ten inches) off the ground. If sitting on the floor itself, do not sit directly, but place at least a mat or garment (in addition to what is being worn). Leather shoes may still be worn.¹³¹

A man should avoid eating the meal with two other men, so as not to form a *zimun*. If three did eat together, they do not *bentch* together, regardless.

Eat bread with a hard-boiled egg, dipping both in ashes, and no other cooked foods (as mentioned earlier).

When completing the meal, it is best to verbally state that you are not yet accepting the fast, so that you may continue to eat and drink until the fast actually begins at *shkiah* (sunset).

At *bentching*, we say *Shir Hamaalos* (as *Tachanun* is not said *erev Tishah B'Av* afternoon).

If you drink water after *bentching*, not from a feeling of thirst but to stay hydrated for the fast, you do not make a *brachah*.

All eating and drinking must conclude **before *shkiah* (8:05 pm)**. At that, all *Tishah B'av* restrictions come into effect.

If you forgot to *bentch*, you may do so after nightfall. *Nachem* for *Tishah B'av* is not said.

TISHAH B'AV PROSCRIPTIONS

FASTING

Note: Review the fasting rules in the entry for the 17th of Tammuz. Only those restrictions that are stricter on *Tishah B'av* are itemized here.

We may not eat or drink even the slightest quantity, although food may be handled.

Expectant and nursing mothers fast the entire *Tishah B'av*, the strictest of the Rabbinical fasts, just as on Yom Kippur. However, if pregnancy is high-risk or difficult, fasting causes an abnormal weakness, or there is a possibility it may cause the milk to dry up, a woman may eat and drink what is essential.

A woman within thirty days of childbirth does not fast.

An ill person who is weak and must eat to sustain their body is allowed to eat and drink, even if the illness is not life-threatening.

¹³¹) The actual mourning practices are not yet in effect. After this meal, you may sit on a regular height chair until *shkiah*. At that point, when exchanging shoes, try not to touch your leather shoes or *Tishah B'av* shoes. If you did touch them, wash your hands only until the knuckles.

Children do not need to fast.

The custom for a *bris* that takes place on *Tishah B'av* is that the father, *mohel* and *sandek* still fast. A minor child is given the wine to drink and the *seudah* takes place that night.

Anyone who is exempt from fasting should eat the basic food needed to sustain them and not indulge.

If a non-faster eats a meal and recites *Birchas Hamazon*, they should include the *Nachem* prayer (it appears in the *Mincha Amidah*) before the *brachah* of *Uv'nei Yerushalayim*, and should conclude the paragraph with “*Baruch...menachem tzion uvoneh Yerushalayim.*”

Smoking: Although smoking is not expressly forbidden on a fast day for someone who smokes regularly, on *Tishah B'av*, the strictest of all fasts, it is best to abstain. Even heavy smokers who are suffering from withdrawal should restrict themselves to lighting up only at home, in private. And among those *poskim* who do permit it in private on the basis of need, many say the leniency applies only after midday (*chatzos*). People who are particularly conscientious will not smoke at all on *Tishah B'av*. However, all the above applies to compulsive smokers; there is no leniency for social smokers, for whom abstaining has little or no physical effect.¹³² In this era of awareness of the extreme dangers of smoking, it should be avoided year-round.

WASHING UP

Washing the body is forbidden, in cold or hot water.¹³³ Rinsing the mouth is also prohibited.

For the morning *netilas yadayim*, wash until the end of your knuckles. Once your fingers are mostly dry, you can wipe your eyes. (If eyes are crusty, and you usually rinse to remove the buildup, you may do so, sparingly, today.)

You may soak a washcloth before *Tishah B'av* begins, and once it is removed and squeezed or hung out until it is only slightly damp,¹³⁴ it may be used on *Tishah B'av* to wipe a face, hands or feet. Disposable wipes, if they are similarly dryish, may also be used.

Even those who strictly use the *mikveh* daily, may not dip today.

If you touch a part of the body that is normally kept covered, scratch your scalp,

¹³² From the halachic sources: “Someone who cares for their (spiritual) life, will avoid smoking on all public fasts, how much more so on *Tishah B'av*, the strictest of all.” Also, “One who smokes on *Tishah B'av* should be ostracized from the community!”

¹³³ A woman who needs to perform a *hefsek taharah* on *Tishah B'av* afternoon should do it differently from her usual (and more restrictively than during the Nine Days). She should wash only the pelvic area and between her thighs with lukewarm or warm water.

¹³⁴ If it is moist enough to wet something else, you may **not** use it.

or touch your shoes (this applies to non-leather as well¹³⁵) you should wash your fingers until the knuckles. When visiting the bathroom, touch private areas and wash your hands as described.¹³⁶ If you are about to *daven*, wash your hands in this manner even if you did not touch a covered area. If you normally wash each hand three times, you may do so today, but only until the knuckles.

If sullied with dirt or excrement, wash the affected area only.

An ill person washes in their ordinary manner.

A new bride within thirty days of her wedding may wash her face on *Tishah B'av*. (She is also exempt from the prohibition on anointing and cosmetics outlined below.)

While preparing food, those who need to rinse off meat (or produce or the like) may run them under the tap as usual, despite the fact that they are simultaneously washing their hands.

Someone who must break their fast and is eating a meal, should wash *netilas yadayim* until their wrists. They should also wash *mayim acharonim* when concluding a meal.

ANOINTING

Smearing oils, creams, gels and balms for enjoyment is forbidden. This includes perfume, make-up powder, and other cosmetic unguents.

Using ointments for the purpose of removing or absorbing grime or sweat is permitted. Wearing deodorant is therefore allowed. You may also use bug repellent on your body, as well as sunscreen, hand sanitizer and medicinal creams.

FOOTWEAR

It is forbidden to wear leather footwear, even if the inside is synthetic, and only the outside is leather. Chabad *minhag* does not follow the opinion that bans rubber galoshes and the like.

A woman within thirty days of childbirth, an ill person who finds cold floors particularly uncomfortable, or someone with a foot injury are permitted to wear regular footwear. However, they still should invite some discomfort such as switching the right shoe for the left, if feasible. Nowadays, where non-leather shoes are easily obtainable and comfortable, a person should not seek to be lenient in this area.

Children should also wear non-leather footwear, even very young children who have not reached the age of *chinuch* (where they understand the concepts behind

¹³⁵) After putting on new *Tishah B'av* shoes for the first time ever, you do not need to wash your hands.

¹³⁶) If you entered the bathroom and left with clean hands, without actually using the facilities, you should not wash them. You can rub them off on some surface (like a stone or wall), even if you are usually stringent about washing.

acts of mourning). Since man-made options are widely available, it is appropriate to make them aware of this prohibition.

In inclement weather, a sensitive person—someone who easily catches cold or whose health may be in danger—who needs to walk outside (such as going to shul or back home from shul) but has no proper footwear, may don their leather shoes until reaching shelter.

Harchakos: Married couples must observe all *harchakos* throughout *Tishah B'av*, from *shkiah* on Wednesday afternoon until the fast ends.¹³⁷

TORAH LEARNING

“Hashem’s Orders are just, they gladden the heart,”¹³⁸ and we are therefore restricted from reading *Tanach* and studying Mishnah, Midrash and Gemara—both the halachic and Aggadic parts, even avoiding giving lessons to small children. However, we may read *Iyov*, the rebuke of *Yirmiyahu* and other tragic tracts, skipping over the comforting verses. It is permissible to learn the Midrash on *Eichah*, and the halachos of mourning, as well as other commentary on *Eichah* and *Iyov*. In this category are also stories of the *Churban* and other national tragedies. We may share these stories with children who have reached the age of understanding.

According to some opinions, we should not even **think** about subjects not in the purview of mourning and the *Churban*.

Those subjects that are permissible should be studied in a straightforward manner, and not through *pilpul* (halachic analysis), homiletics or in question/answer format, for all these are enjoyable modes of learning.

You may read all parts of *tefillah*, including *Krias Shema* (from Torah) and *Korbanos* (from Torah and Mishnah) and “*Rabi Yishmael Omer*”. The Torah reader may review the *kriah* for the day, even the portion that he will only have to read later at *Minchah* time.

Siyum: The Nine-Day *siyum* initiative should continue into *Tishah B'av* as well, in a way that is permissible, by completing subjects that may be learned at this time, like *Maseches Moed Katan* or *Maseches Semachos*.

¹³⁷) A woman who is meant to visit the *mikveh* on *Tishah B'av* postpones it to the following night. If possible, she should do a few of her preparations on Wednesday, *erev Tishah B'av*, taking care to remain without *chatzitzah* over *Tishah B'av* by not walking around barefoot and the like. On *motzoei Tishah B'av* she prepares again. However, if she was not able to prepare on Wednesday at all, she may still go to the *mikveh* after the fast, but must spend at least an hour on her preps.

You may perform a *hefsek taharah* on *Tishah B'av* in a restricted manner; see above with regard to washing.

¹³⁸) Tehillim 19:9

SIYUM ON GOLUS

Even when Moshiach is here, we will still make a *siyum* on *Tishah B'av*.¹³⁹ We will do so in Moshiach's presence, with great joy, accompanied by a most extravagant feast of meat and wine.¹⁴⁰ Since Moshiach will surely be here before *Tishah B'av*, this day will also be the greatest of *yomim tovim*, so, of course, the rejoicing and partaking will be tremendous. It will be a *siyum* on our *golus* Torah learning, for that mode will become outdated, trailing in the dust of the "new" (dimensions of) Torah of Moshiach!¹⁴¹

Every year on *Tishah B'av*, the Rebbe Rashab would study *Eichah Rabbah* and the *sugya* of "Rabbi Yochanan" in *Maseches Gittin*.

ELIXIR OF CHASSIDUS

It is appropriate to learn those topics that are **timely**, as *Chazal* tell us. The Rebbe refers specifically to the notes of the Tzemach Tzedek on Megillas Eichah. There,¹⁴² the Rebbe also talks all about the great advantage of learning the inner aspect of Torah (Chassidus) on *Tishah B'av*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates¹⁴³ that he saw his father (the Rebbe Rashab) learning Chassidus on *Tishah B'av*, but it seemed like he was only skimming the text.

It is told in the name of Reb Hillel of Paritch,¹⁴⁴ that learning Kabbalah is permitted on *Tishah B'av*, "for the secrets of Torah are only transmitted to a person with a worrying heart."

SICHAH FOR TODAY

On the fast of *Tishah B'av*, 5751 (it was Sunday, 10 Av, 5751, a postponed fast), the Rebbe said a *sichah* before Maariv.¹⁴⁵

"The restrictions on *Tishah B'av*," the Rebbe clarified at the time,¹⁴⁶ "apply to some very specific aspects of Torah learning. But those subjects that are authorized, it is obvious that (it's not just recommended, but) we are completely obligated in their study and we gain great merit when we do so. So, on the contrary, *Tishah B'av* becomes a day when we seek out solutions on how to remove all restrictions and ultimately transform it "to days of happiness and joy and good time," as was done last year *Tishah B'av*."

The Rebbe explains¹⁴⁷, "Even on *Tishah B'av* in *golus* (as we were last year, but will,

139) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah* of *erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av*, 5735

140) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Maasei*, 5743

141) *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 2, pg. 579. See fn. 190 there.

142) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, pg. 250 (From a *sichah* in 5730).

143) *Sefer Hasichos*, 5690 pg. 134

144) Quoted in *Nesiv Hachaim*.

145) The *sichah* is recorded in *Sefer Hasichos* 5751, vol. 2, pg. 721, and it's noted there: At 8:35 pm the Rebbe Shlita entered shul, and started to speak...

146) *Roshei Devarim* of the the *sichah* of the second day of Sukkos, 5752.

147) *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, pg. 574 ff.

G-d willing no longer be this year) when you are **forbidden** to read *Tanach* (and there are so many restrictions on what you may learn) you are still **required to learn Torah every moment!** How? By studying those subjects and aspects of Torah that are appropriate for a day like this.”

SAYING HELLO

It is forbidden to greet another on *Tishah B'av* with “Shalom!” or “Hello!”. This includes other greetings in the same spirit, like “good morning!”. If you are greeted by someone who is unaware of this restriction, you should respond in a subdued voice and inform them that we do not greet people today.

However, non-greeting wishes are permitted, like to bless someone with a long life, or “get well!” and the like. “*Mazal tov!*” is also not considered a restricted salutation.

We do not bestow gifts on *Tishah B'av*. However, we may give gifts to a poor person (especially one who is a *talmid chacham*) and, all the more so, when giving them money to provide for their family. In fact, it’s a mitzvah; in every Jewish community it is customary to increase *tzedakah* to the poor on *Tishah B'av*.

Excursions: Do not aimlessly go on walks today, or browse in stores, for these activities are recreational, and invite twaddle and laughter.

Cuddling Babies: Curb spontaneous snuggling with young children, since this often leads to laughter and levity. Obviously, if a child is crying or upset, you may hug and cuddle to calm them.

SEATING

We do not sit on chairs (or benches, sofas or stools) of normal height from the evening of *Tishah B'av* until *chatzos* the next day, at **1:03 pm**. Traditionally, mourners would sit on the floor with a cushion or mat.¹⁴⁸ But these also qualify: low stools, overturned chairs or benches, kiddie chairs, couch frames with the cushions removed and other low seating with the seat less than three *tefachim* (about nine to ten inches) off the ground.

A person who is ill or weak, an expectant or nursing mother (while she nurses) may sit on a chair of regular height. If traveling by car, you may also sit as normal (although some would use a hard seat or plank of wood to sit on). A *sandak* at a *bris* sits on a seat of normal height, as does the person who is raising the Torah by *kriah* (when he sits down to have it tied and dressed).

DOWN LOW

Reb Pinchas of Koritz says,¹⁴⁹ “On *Tishah B'av*, when we sit on the ground, we can obtain everything we wish for from Hashem. For on this level too He is found.”

¹⁴⁸) According to Kabbalah, we may not sit directly on the floor; an intervening object (not just the clothes on your body) should be used, at the very least.

¹⁴⁹) *Sefer Imrei Pinchas*

MELACHAH

We do not do *melachah* (involved work) until *chatzos* (1:03 pm.) Someone with stellar *yiras Shomayim* stringently avoids work throughout the day.

What qualifies as *melachah*, in this context, is creative work that requires some “puttering” (steps and process), even if it is not professional work. Using electricity, lighting a fire, or knotting an item in one step, for example, are permitted. Writing is also allowed.¹⁵⁰ If the project is in danger of being lost or ruined, *melachah* may be performed, but it may not be done in public. Construction, a form of work that cannot be kept quiet, is thus expressly forbidden.

Light housework is permitted as needed, even before *chatzos*. A non-Jew may do this work for a Jew, even in a Jewish home.

It is brought in sources that any money earned from work conducted on *Tishah B'av* will not be revenue for *brachah*. This refers specifically to someone who sets themselves up to attend to business and distracts themselves from the true purpose of the day, which is mourning the *Beis Hamikdash* (and praying for its reconstruction).

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, 9 AV—TISHAH B'AV

May this day be transformed to a day of happiness and joy—“True joy will only come on *Tishah B'av*”¹⁵¹

Five events of national tragedy occurred on *Tishah B'av*: 1. The Jewish nation was banned from entering *Eretz Yisroel*, and forty years of wandering the desert commenced. 2. The first *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed by the Babylonian king Nevuchadnezzar. 3. The second *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed by the Roman general Titus. 4. The stronghold of Beitar fell at the hands of the Romans, and the Jewish leader Ben Kuziva (who was presumed Moshiach) and tens of thousands of the Jews taking refuge there were massacred. 5. The site of the *Beis Hamikdash* was razed by the *rasha* Tinus-Rufus, in fulfillment of the words of the *navi*,¹⁵² “*Tzion* will be plowed like a field.”

In numerous sources, starting with the famous *navi*,¹⁵³ “the fast of the fifth month will be transformed to a day of joy,” we learn that not only will *Tishah B'av* cease to be a fast day, it will become a great Yom Tov—greater than all the festivals established until now, and the greatest among the fasts that will be converted to *yomim tovim* as well.

150) Can a professional writer or editor work? *Poskim* are divided on the matter. Practically, it is restricted.

151) Commentary on Tehillim 137: “Currently it is a time of mourning but in the future Hashem will turn it into a Yom Tov, as it says in Navi Yirmiyahu.” The *Kedushas Levi* (and others) on the saying of *Chazal*: One who mourns Yerushalayim will merit (*zocheh*) to see it in its joy”. The term *zocheh* can also mean to clarify (remove impurities)—with the right attitude we can see the joy even now; some level of the future happiness can be experienced as we anticipate the *geulah*.

152) Michah 3:12

153) Zechariah 8:19

JOY, TODAY!

The Rebbe writes: I hope you will not suspect me of being reproachful and giving *mussar*, my only intent with these words is to issue them as a challenge that will hopefully have the practical impact of growing another Jew's *bitachon* and joy. There is a well-known Chassidic *vort* concerning the *possuk*, "Serve Hashem with joy"—that it applies even on *Tishah B'av* (may it be immediately transformed to happiness and joy with Moshiach's arrival). This means, that when a person fasts and says *Kinos*, it is also done with a joyful attitude, that of, "How lucky I am that I have the opportunity to fulfill the instructions of the King of all kings, Hashem." As the Rambam rules at the end of the *Hilchos Lulav*, that we should distance ourselves from a person who eschews joy. And of one who actively pursues it (he says): This is a high level of service of Hashem. (See the details there.¹⁵⁴)

BIRTH OF REDEMPTION

The Talmud Yerushalmi states that on the day of *Tishah B'av*, when the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, *Melech Hamoshiach* was born. Since on the day of a birthday a person's *mazal* is predominant, it follows that this is an especially propitious time for salvation and redemption. This idea has halachic ramifications, as we find in the writings of Rabbi Chaim Vital (in the name of the Arizal): "this is the reason we say *Nachem* in the *Amidah* of Minchah...because at the time of Minchah on *Tishah B'av*, Moshiach was born, and he is called Menachem."

The Rebbe has also suggested that it is on the strength of this event (Moshiach's birth) that *Tishah B'av* (even now in *golus*) goes by the term "*Mo'ed*".

In *sefarim* it is mentioned that the days of *Bein Hametzarim*, between the 17th of Tammuz and *Tishah B'av*, parallel the days between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Hoshanah Rabba*, and *Tishah B'av* is like *Shemini Atzeres* (and *Simchas Torah*). We also find that the first nine days of the month of Av (the Nine Days) are directly aligned with all the days of *Sukkos*, and *Tishah B'av* is *Simchas Torah* itself.

The entire time of *Tishah B'av* should be focused on our mourning of the *Churban* without distraction. "One who mourns Yerushalayim will merit to see its joy" say *Chazal*, as it says in the *possuk* in *navi*,¹⁵⁵ "Rejoice with her... all who mourned her." At the same time, however, we are forbidden to become depressed, *chas v'shalom*, for we are enjoined to "serve Hashem with joy"¹⁵⁶ at all times.

A CHOSSID SEES

"We witnessed one of your great Chassidim wailing on *Simchas Torah* and singing on *Tishah B'av*!" a group of Lithuanian Jews complained to the Tzemach Tzedek

¹⁵⁴) Chapter 8, Halachah 15 (translated by Rabbi E. Touger, published by *Moznaim*): The happiness with which a person should rejoice in the fulfillment of the mitzvos and the love of G-d who commanded them is a great service. Whoever holds himself back from this rejoicing is worthy of retribution, as [Devarim 28:47] states: "...because you did not serve God, your Lord, with happiness and a glad heart."

¹⁵⁵) Yishayahu 66:10

¹⁵⁶) Tehillim 100:2

(also adding a disclaimer about why their report should not be considered *lashon hara*). The Rebbe answered them: "For a Chossid, the *niggun* is not just about joy, nor is the crying on account of depression...on *Tishah B'av*, when a Chossid sees the devastation of the *Churban* fulfilled, he also experiences 'in every difficulty there is gain'¹⁵⁷ and his firm belief in the fulfillment of the promises of the *geulah* causes him to sing a *niggun* to 'delight in Hashem'¹⁵⁸

TISHAH B'AV NIGHT

MAARIV

The *paroches* is removed from the *aron kodesh*. The lights in the shul are dimmed (with only enough lighting as needed to read the *Kinos*).

The Ramah writes that we should pray slowly and mournfully. Eichah is read this way, as well.

After the Maariv *Amidah*, the *chazzan* recites *Kaddish tiskabel*¹⁵⁹, which is followed by Eichah, and *Kinos*. Throughout, those who are sitting should sit low down (as described above). *Kinos* followed by *V'Atah Kadosh*, and then *Kaddish Shalem* without *tiskabel*.

SAFE!

The Ramak writes¹⁶⁰: On the night of *Tishah B'av*, our sorrowful attitude can attract the attention of the *klipos* for a mourner is in a situation of danger, open to the effect of harmful spirits. In order to neutralize them, we mention the *geulah* (in the *tefillah* of *V'Atah Kadosh*), invoking a time when all evil will be nullified permanently.

Eichah & Kinos

During the reading of Eichah by the *chazzan*, with the congregation reading along quietly, he should pause between each *possuk*, with a longer break between one chapter and the next. The last *possuk* is read in a much louder voice. When the *chazzan* reaches this *possuk*, the congregation should first say it out loud, then the *chazzan*, then the congregation repeats it, as does the *chazzan*, at last.

IMPERMANENT GOLUS

"All my life I wondered," says the Levush, "why the *megillah* that we read in public on Purim is written on a beautiful scroll by expert scribes—should not the same that is done for Esther be required for us to fulfill our obligation of reading Eichah? But perhaps, this is the prevailing custom because the scribes don't want to write such a

157) Mishlei 14:23

158) *Sefer Hasichos* 5703, pg. 41

159) If the *chazzan* forgets to say the *tiskabel* version of *Kaddish*, but remembers before Eichah begins, a chapter of Tehillim should be read followed by *Kaddish tiskabel*. After Eichah and *Kinos*, it should not be corrected.

160) In his *Sefer Gerushin*.

scroll! We await Moshiach every day, a time when *Tishah B'av* will turn into a Yom Tov.

“If the *sofrim* would write Megillas Eichah in the same way as Megillas Esther,¹⁶¹ it would seem that they have relented to *golus, chas v'shalom*. So here we are, forced to read Eichah from a Chumash...”

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe explains how in the notes of the Tzemach Tzedek on Megillas Eichah, he shows how the rebuke can be interpreted in a positive light. “In the same manner that curses (of the Torah) are transformed to blessings, so can the verses of Eichah become praises.” In fact, Chassidus posits that the greatest blessings present as curses in the Torah.

We learn in the name of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev¹⁶²: In the future, we will make a *brachah* of *Shehechyanu* when we read Megillas Eichah. We will read it slowly¹⁶³—(not because we are suffering through it but) because we are struck in a good way—it is such a pleasurable reading that we become speechless.

Someone who *davens* Maariv without a *minyán* should read Eichah and *Kinos* on their own.

AFTER MAARIV

Someone who is observing a *yahrtzeit*, or is within the year of mourning, should say only those *Mishnayos* that are from the permissible sections of *Mesechtos Taanis* and *Mo'ed Katan* until *chatzos* tomorrow. The Mishna of Rabi Chananya is omitted as well. After *chatzos*, he follows the same schedule as other *shiurim*. On *Tishah B'av* we honor fixed *shiurim* as we do throughout the year, despite the limitations.¹⁶⁴

We return home, leaving shul as if banished by Hashem. The mood is sorrowful, serious and introspective; as is fitting on *Tishah B'av*, we do not socialize. It is forbidden to exchange greetings, as mentioned above.

You should refrain from small pleasures and comforts as much as possible. However, this instruction does not extend to sleeping on the ground or putting a rock under your head instead of a pillow.

THURSDAY, 9 MENACHEM AV—TISHAH B'AV

EARLY MORNING

Morning *negel vasser* is poured only until the knuckles. The *brachah* of *al netilas yadayim* is said.

161) for, unlike all other celebratory days, Purim will endure forever.

162) *Kedushas Levi Hashalem*, vol. 2, new *likkutim* for *Tishah B'av*, pg. 526

163) As mentioned above, we do this in *golus* as a show of mourning.

164) See below in the entry for tomorrow afternoon.

In morning *Brachos*, we skip the blessing of *she'asah li kol tzorki*.

No *brachah* is made on *tzitzis* this morning. A (married) man will don his *tallis* for Minchah, and make a *brachah* then (see below in the Minchah entry). In the case of an unmarried *bachur* or a child who will not wear a *tallis* at all that day, it might be halachically problematic to put on a new pair of *tzitzis* in the morning and not make a *brachah*. So he should wait to change the *tallis katan* until the afternoon, prior to Minchah, and make a *brachah* then.

SHACHARIS

We should arrive a little earlier than usual to shul. However, it is better to arrive a bit later and fill all the time until *chatzos* with davening and *Kinos*, than to start and finish earlier and leave too many unfulfilled morning hours.

Tishah B'av is called "*Mo'ed*", and therefore we do not say *Tachanun* and skip all sections of *tefillah* that we usually do in these circumstances. This designation is a sign of our firm belief that Hashem will transform this day to one of *Yom Tov* and joy. Indeed, the depth of the mourning and tragedy correlates exactly with the great heights of the eventual joy and festivity, like light that emerges from darkness. This day is also the birthday of *Moshiach*.¹⁶⁵

These normal Shacharis-related activities are suspended today:

The lighting in the shul remains low, and the two candles that are normally on the *chazzan's* table remain unlit.

Men do not don a *tallis* or *tefillin* to *daven* Shacharis, and it follows that they do not hold their *tzitzis* as usual during *Baruch she'amar* and *Krias Shema*.

We say the weekday Shacharis as normal, including *Mizmor l'sodah*.¹⁶⁶ (However, after the reading of the Torah, the regular conclusion of the *tefillos* are suspended until *chatzos*, as will be detailed further.)

The *chazzan* (only) says *Aneinu* and only during the repetition of the *Amidah*, between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. If a *chazzan* mistakenly omits *Aneinu*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

The *chazzan* does not say *Birchas Kohanim* as part of his repetition.

Krias Hatorah & Kinos

Following the *chazzan's* repetition is half-*Kaddish*. We do not say *Tachanun* (as mentioned above) or *Selichos*. We take the *sefer Torah* out and read three *aliyos* beginning *Ki solid banim* in *Parshas Va'eschanan*, which speaks about the devastation of *Eretz Yisroel*. After half-*Kaddish*, we read *Asof asifem* (from *Yirmiyahu*) for the *Haftorah*, which concerns the *Churban*. The regular, year-round tune is used. Use a *siddur* to read the *brachos* of *Haftorah*, as the version that

¹⁶⁵ See more above, in the introductory *sichos* relating to the deeper meaning of *Tishah B'av*.

¹⁶⁶ for in the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, a *Korban Todah* was offered on *Tishah B'av*.

appears in the *Kinos* booklets are not according to *nusach Chabad*.

There is no *Mi shebeirach* said for those who receive an *aliyah* or for a new child, however a *Mi shebeirach* for the sick is said.

A bar mitzvah boy should receive his *aliyah* at Minchah time.

The one who lifts the Torah should sit on a regular-height seat while the Torah is wrapped, as mentioned.

After the Torah is read comes *Yehalelu* and the return of the *sefer Torah* to the *aron*. The day *Kinos* are all recited, filling our time until just before *chatzos* (1:03 pm). Throughout the *Kinos*, we sit low down, and say the *Kinos* in a mournful, wailing tone.¹⁶⁷ We may not speak at all, nor leave the room, so as not to disturb our concentration and our emotional reaction to the *Churban*. Halachah speaks specifically about not interrupting to speak to a non-Jew, and also reprimands those who spend this time throwing things around (like *berelach*, see below.) Even throughout the year, we may not behave in this flippant manner in shul, and especially on *Tishah B'av*, specifically while lamenting the greatest of all national tragedies! Much rebuke is written in *sefarim* regarding those who do not say the *Kinos* with the right attitude, or worse, G-d forbid, spend the time kibitzing around instead.

The *kinah* of *Eli Tzion* is traditionally chanted by the *chazzan* and the congregation while standing.

When *Kinos* is completed, we say *Ashrei* and *U'va l'Tziyon*—skipping over the *possuk* of *Va'ani zos brisi...* Full *Kaddish* is said, without *tiskabel*. *Aleinu*, mourner's *Kaddish* (along with allowable *Mishnayos*, as mentioned regarding last night). Then *Kaddish D'rabbanan*. It is proper to say *Eichah* again by day (though it is not read publicly)

KEEPING KINOS?

"I heard from my father in the name of the *Machatzis Hashekel*, who did have the bound copy of the *Kinos* with *Eichah*," says the *Toras Chaim* (R' Yaakov Shalom Sofer), "He would buy a new *Kinos* every year, and on *Tishah B'av* after reading from it, he would leave it *hefker* in shul. He was concerned that a bound copy that would be shelved from year to year would indicate that he despairs of the *geulah* arriving (before the next *Tishah B'av*)."

The *Ruzhiner*, on the other hand, is of the opinion that we will continue to recite *Kinos* in the future, but the tune will be a happy one and they will be *kinos* (poems) marking joyful events. The *Ba'alei Tosfos*, similarly, connected the book of *Eichah* to happy compositions: With its mnemonic alphabetical theme, it reflects the style of songs and hymns (and will actually be so, as well, in the future).

¹⁶⁷ "As if sitting in the presence of the body of the newly deceased."

AFTERNOON

You may continue to say *Kinos* after *chatzos* (1:03 pm) if you did not complete them before then. Then slip out of shul—with a demeanor of one who Hashem has ostracized—do not stay to socialize, and remember the restriction on greeting others.

After *chatzos* (or upon completing *Kinos*, if doing so after midday), we are permitted to sit on regular-height chairs.

Concerning the encouragement in various *sefarim* to visit the cemetery on *Tishah B'av*, the Rebbe says¹⁶⁸: Although it is recommended, I have never seen the (Frierdiker) Rebbe practice this. Perhaps this is because we cannot go to the *mikveh* today (and he customarily went to the *mikveh* before going to the *tziyon*). I saw it likewise (in other sources). Now, some say to go, but remain outside—I did not see the Rebbe do this either. This may be because even viewing the *tziyon* from afar creates a connection and the Rebbe did not want even this level of contact without purification in a *mikveh* first.

It is customary to refrain from food preparation until after *chatzos*, though someone who is not saying *Kinos* beforehand anyway should better be involved in preparing the meal for after the fast than getting involved in inane activities and frivolousness. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, we refrain from strolling or browsing in public.

The Rebbe encourages us to utilize this time (of the Nine Days) and especially on *Tishah B'av* to give as many Jews as possible the opportunity to don *tefillin* (once it is permitted after midday).¹⁶⁹ Take along a *pushka* to encourage the giving of *tzedakah* and prepare words of Torah appropriate for the time to share with those you meet—deliver them in a personal and loving manner to each individual.¹⁷⁰

MINCHAH

Daven Minchah later in the afternoon. In 770, Minchah takes place at its regularly scheduled time.

A LITTLE LATER

"On fast days in Lubavitch, we'd daven Minchah late." the Frierdiker Rebbe writes in *Likkutei Dibburim*, "To be precise: 'late' does not mean 'later than the *zman*, once the sun has set,' but 'in the later hours of the day'—like: eight o'clock on the 17th of Tammuz and seven o'clock on *Tishah B'av*."¹⁷¹

A set of activities precede Minchah to make up for those missed in the morning:

- The *paroches* is returned to its rightful place before Minchah, and the candles on the lectern are lit.

168) *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 11, pg. 307

169) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 9, p. 251

170) *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 575

171) Ed. note: *Shkiah* in Lubavitch at this time of year is after nine o'clock.

- Men don their *tallis* and *tefillin*, which were not worn in the morning, with a *brachah*. A *bachur* who is not putting on a *tallis* should change his *tallis katan* at this time and make a *brachah* as well.
- The three paragraphs of *Shema* are recited holding your *tzitzis* (for the *tefillin*) and the last *tefillos* of Shacharis are recited (from *Shir shel Yom* until the end).
- An individual's regular post-Shacharis *shiurim* are completed, including *Lamenatzeach ya'anacha* (because no *Tachanun* is said today, it is skipped in Shacharis and recited with the daily Tehillim) and the daily *shiur* of Tehillim.
- Minchah begins (see details below).

This is the order for Minchah: *Korbanos*. *Ashrei* followed by half-*Kaddish*. The reading of the Torah (*Vayechal*) and the *Haftorah* (*Dirshu*). *Yehalelu* followed by half-*Kaddish*. *Amidah* with the addition of *Aneinu* and *Nachem*. The repetition by the *chazzan*, with *Aneinu*, *Nachem* and *Birchas Kohanim*. *Kaddish tiskabel*. *Aleinu*, followed by the mourner's *Kaddish*. Regular *Mishnayos* and *Kaddish D'rabbanan*.

Toward the end of the middle section of the *Amidah*, in the *brachah* of *boneh Yerushalayim*, we say the paragraph of *Nachem*, which ends with the the *brachah* of “*menachem Tziyon u'voneh Yerushalayim*.” Even non-fasters add this paragraph to their *Amidah* (unlike *Aneinu*, see below). If you forgot to say *Nachem*, or mistakenly said the wrong concluding words, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

Then, before concluding the blessing of *Shema Koleinu*, *Aneinu* is recited by all (fasting congregants). If it is mistakenly omitted, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

In his repetition of the *Amidah*, the *chazzan* says *Aneinu* after the *brachah* of *go'el Yisroel*, and *Birchas Kohanim* as usual (unlike Shacharis). The *chazzan* says *Nachem* in *boneh Yerushalayim* in the same place as during the individual *Amidah*.

Tzedakah: It is customary to give an abundance of *tzedakah* on public fast days. Calculate the cost of the food that you would have eaten were it not a fast day— and to give that amount to the poor during the evening of the fast.¹⁷²

Those who wear additional pairs of *tefillin* daily (*Rabbeinu Tam*, popularly, or *Ra'avad* and *Shimusha Rabba*), should don them on *Tishah B'av* as well after Minchah. Say the three paragraphs of *Shema*, *Kadesh* and *V'haya ki yivi'acha*, as usual.

172) Do not use *maaser* money for this purpose.

LEARNING

Daily Shiurim: The Rebbe instructs¹⁷³ not to push off *Chitas* until nighttime, despite other restrictions on learning. Regarding *Rambam*, as it states explicitly in the published schedule (*moreh shiur*): learn it after the fast is over.

There is a well-published practice to say *pessukim* of comfort from the *nevi'im* this late afternoon. In *sefarim* it is written: "Do not forgo this custom, so that it will be established in the hearts of the populace that Hashem will indeed redeem us in His Mercy when all these words of comfort from our prophets will be speedily fulfilled."

BE HAPPY, NO JOKES!

"The Tzemach Tzedek called the Ruzhiner, 'the Holy Ruzhiner,'" it says in *Sefer Haminhagim*.¹⁷⁴ "And he told this story about him: The Holy Ruzhiner would urge to stay far away from depressive, and even bitter, thoughts, and his Chassidim would play practical jokes. On *Tishah B'av*, they would throw *berelach* (thistles). Then someone came up with the idea to open the rooftop of the *beis midrash*, and lower a noose. When someone would enter, the Chassidim on the roof would throw the noose on him and draw him up. So they did... Then the Ruzhiner entered, straight into the trap. Those on the roof did not see who it was, so they raised the rope. When they recognized the Rebbe, they quickly lowered him back into the shul. The Ruzhiner said: 'Look, *Ribbono shel Olam!* If your children cannot respect your holiday, please, just take it away from them!'"

"In Lubavitch, some particular periods during *Tishah B'av* were joyous." the Rebbe states¹⁷⁵, then asks: "How can it be proper to be happy? Halachah is very specific that even learning is limited to laws and tracts on mourning—and this concerns subjects in Torah, which is really higher than any limitations of time and space... But truly, crying and mourning the *Churban* is not the essence of *Tishah B'av*, it is how we translate this message into practice in our service of Hashem that is most important. It is specifically (through joy) that we can build a microcosmic *Beis Hamikdash* (a place for Hashem's Presence in our hearts), and as it says in *Igeres Hakodesh*, that it is through our personal redemptions that we merit the *geulah* for everyone."

LIGHTENING UP

In *Shaar Hakavanos*: It is customary (to break somewhat from our deep mourning and) say *pessukim* from the words of comfort of the *nevi'im* and also go back to sitting on benches in the afternoon of *Tishah B'av*. This seems counterintuitive: it is specifically at that time, after *Minchah* on the 9th day of *Av*, that "a fire broke out in the Heichal..." Shouldn't we be **more** stringent with mourning practices at that time? But we can understand this reversal from the story in the Gemara, based on

173) *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 13, pg. 331. Arguably, **Tehillim** can be said as a type of *tefillah*, for **Tanya** we extrapolate from the leniency for (regular) mourners, **Chumash**—there is a specific dispensation for reviewing the weekly *parshah*.

174) *Laws of Bein Hametzarim*

175) *Roshei Devarim* of a *sichah* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5725

Tehillim,¹⁷⁶ that when the *Heichal* was invaded and the murder rampage began on the *Yidden* there, it seemed that this was the end of the Jewish nation at the hand of the enemies' sword, *chas v'shalom*. But then, toward evening, the remnant *Yidden* saw how the *Heichal* went up in flames and they began to say this *mizmor*, a song of praise. Great joy broke out among them for the sight was a great comfort: this was the fulfillment of the *navi's* promise that Hashem would pour his anger (at the sins of the Jews) on "wood beams and stones" instead for "a fire has flared up from *Tzion*". For this, the *Yidden* celebrated at exactly this time of day. An additional reason (as I heard from my teacher, the Arizal) is that at that moment in time, Moshiach was born, and he is called "Menachem", as is recorded in the Midrash Eichah.

THURSDAY NIGHT

The fast is over at **8:48 pm**.

Maariv is recited on time. There is no halachic basis for prolonging the fast, which would constitute discomfort for a great part of the community.

Wash your hands three times each without a *brachah*, past the wrists, put on your leather footwear, and rinse your face and mouth before *Kiddush Levanah*, as per the conclusion of the Yom Kippur fast.

Sefer Seder Hayom: "Go home, accept condolences on your sorrow by believing with perfect faith that our Hashem will comfort us from our mourning (permanently) as He promised through His prophets."

KIDDUSH LEVANAH

Kiddush Levanah is recited after Maariv, with a *gartel* and a *siddur*.¹⁷⁷

THE REDEMPTION CONNECTION

From a letter of *motzoei Tishah B'av* 5744: It is a *minhag* to do *Kiddush Levanah* specifically on *motzoei Tishah B'av*. The reasons for this are found in many places—(in order to usurp the negative residue of *Tishah B'av*, we follow with) a practice that bears a positive message: *Yidden* and the *Shechinah*, though currently in *golus* at the nadir of our history, will merit to rise again in the future and wax like the moon. Another connection to *Tishah B'av* is that Moshiach's birthday is at Minchah time on *Tishah B'av*. (In *Kiddush Levanah*, we proclaim "Dovid, the king of Yisrael, is alive and enduring!"¹⁷⁸)

BREAK-FAST

It is proper to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine (except for a *seudas mitzvah*¹⁷⁸) until *chatzos* of the 10th of Av. This is on account of the embers—

176) Chapter 79

177) To eat or not to eat before *Kiddush Levanah*? In *Sefer Haminhagim*, regarding post-Yom Kippur, it seems clear that breaking the fast should precede *Kiddush Levanah*. So it was done in 770 until 5731. However, more recently, *Kiddush Levanah* was recited first, and that is how it is currently practiced.

178) In this detail, we are less stringent than the Nine Days. Even non-relatives can partake. However, we

from the fire that broke out on the afternoon 9th of Av and destroyed the *Beis Hamikdash*—continued to burn past sunset (when it was already the 10th of Av).

Essentially, all the restrictions of the Nine Days are in force until *chatzos* the next day for the above reason. However, since tomorrow is Friday, *erev Shabbos*, it is permitted to bathe, cut hair, and do laundry even before *chatzos*.¹⁷⁹

LONGER NIGHT, LEARN MORE

"From *Kumi* ('Arise') until *Shichvi* ('Lie Down'), you should arise (*kumi!*)" is a mnemonic quoted by latter-day *poskim* to encourage us to take advantage of the lengthening nighttime hours. The meaning of the cryptic saying is as follows: From the time we say *Kumi roni balailah* ("Arise and cry out in the night") in *Megillas Eichah*¹⁸⁰ on *Tishah B'av* until the following Shavuot, when we read in *Megillas Rus*,¹⁸¹ *Shichvi ad haboker* ("Lie down until morning"), the shortest nights of the year are past and therefore, "*Kumi!*"—remain awake while it is dark to learn Torah.

FRIDAY, 10 MENACHEM AV—EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN

NON-PREPARATORY RESTRICTIONS

As mentioned in last night's entry, the Nine-Day restrictions that impede Shabbos preparations may be overlooked this morning. However, all other restrictions, including listening to music, eating meat and drinking wine (except at a *seudas mitzvah*) remain in effect.

Upshernish: A boy who turned three during *Bein Hametzarim* delays his hair cutting until the afternoon of the 10th of Av. However, since it is Friday, *erev Shabbos*, the upsherin may be held in the morning hours.

MORE SIYUMIM

"These days following *Tishah B'av*," the Rebbe says on *Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5751, "From now until the 15th of Av are a continuation of the 9th of Av. If *chas veshalom*, Moshiach's coming will be delayed in these coming days, we must continue to hold *siyumim* until, and including the 15th of Av."

ZECHER L'CHURBAN

After *Tishah B'av* and the morning of the 10th of Av, we are meant to cease our mourning, and concentrate on the aspect of comfort—in halachah, it is forbidden to act beyond what is required in *aveilus* (mourning practices).

After the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, the *Chachamim* instituted that every

customarily do not make a *zimun* on wine tonight at a regular meal.

179) If these activities are performed in preparation of Shabbos, they may be done even on Thursday night.

180) 2:19

181) 3:13

joyous occasion should include a *zecher* (act of remembrance) for the *Churban*.¹⁸² As it states in Tehillim,¹⁸³ “If I forget you, Yerushalayim...if I do not go up to Yerushalayim at the beginning of my joyous occasion!”

Other institutions by the *Chachamim* associated with remembrance: not to build palace-quality homes (in appearance and permanence), to refrain from plastering, painting, or papering the entire house when building or renovating, but to leave an unfinished area that is an *amah* square (about 1.5 feet) across the entry.¹⁸⁴ (It is not clear, *poskim* write, why this practice is not popular these days.)¹⁸⁵

After the *Churban*, playing or listening to live music was restricted to occasions associated with a *mitzvah*. *Poskim* tell us that it is also allowed if the purpose is to heighten our emotional state in order to better serve Hashem, and according to some—to prevent depression. In general, this is a form of *zecher l'churban* that has been waived for many reasons today—but we should still be aware of the parameters of the strict letter of the law on this subject.¹⁸⁶

Unrestrained levity and laughter, according to *Chachamim*, must likewise be curbed until the time in the future (the Final Redemption) when “then our mouths will be full of laughter.”¹⁸⁷ (It should be noted, however, that it is recorded that the *Chachamim* rejoiced in the study of the prophecies of consolation.)

LAUGH AT LAST

In 5751, the Rebbe urged us¹⁸⁸ to publicize everywhere that we are standing at the finish line, the culmination of all our efforts over thousands of years, and at the early stages of reaping the reward (for all our collective suffering in *golus*). Our response to acknowledging this reality must be to engage in matters associated with the days of Moshiach, beginning with learning Torah on topics related to Moshiach, *geulah* and the *Beis Hamikdash*, most essentially focusing on doing so with serenity, *simchah* (joy) and gladness of heart. We can accomplish this level of peace and tranquility through organizing *simchah*-themed *farbrengens*, especially in connection with the joyful occasions of weddings and *sheva brachos*, which are a foretaste and a preparation to the fulfillment of the verse, “and then (in the future era) our mouths will be full of laughter.” Now it begins, in our generation, in which its leader, the (Friediker) Rebbe embodies this theme—his second name being,

182) See [#21227](http://www.asktherav.com) regarding our (non-)practice of placing ash on the groom's forehead or mentioning the *posuk* quoted here under the *chuppah*.

183) 137:5,6

184) Some maintain that this should be done in every room, though most *poskim* agree that this refers just to the main entrance to the home. The *zecher* must be styled and sized as described—other forms of downgrading the finish do not suffice.

185) See [#344](http://www.halacha2go.com); [#5498](http://www.asktherav.com)

186) For in-depth explanation and sources, see [#16544](http://www.asktherav.com)

187) Tehillim 126:2. See [#2799](http://www.asktherav.com). See Hebrew footnotes for more details and sources in *Chassidus* for this concept.

188) See the full message in *Sefer Hasichos* 5751, vol. 2, p. 808; this is but a short summary.

“Yitzchak”, which means laughter and joy, and he is the **eighth** *Nasi* from the Baal Shem Tov, which is numerically equivalent to the Hebrew word *az* (אז), the first word of the verse mentioned above, and in a manner that we interpret this opening word not as a future occurrence, but in the present (**So**, our mouths will be filled...).

The Shaloh writes: The words of the Midrash that “in the future (*asidin*), the Jewish people will sing a song in the future to come (*l’asid lavo*),” mean that at that future time when they will be told the good news that the *geulah* is imminent, they will immediately begin to sing about the later future and the great miracles to come—in their strong faith it will be as if that which is in the future is already happening!

ANTICIPATION & JOY

In 5752, the Rebbe states¹⁸⁹: At the time of the redemption from Egypt, the Midrash tells us that “**The righteous women of the generation were confident** that Hashem would perform miracles for them that they (prepared and) took along instruments from *Mitzrayim*.” So, too with regard to the redemption from our final *golus*, that the righteous Jewish women must be confident—and surely they are **confident**—that the complete and true Redemption is imminent, to the point that they are already beginning (in these last moments of *golus*) with **song** [in a footnote: obviously with the utmost *tznius*] **accompanied by tambourines and dancing, until the *geulah* actually arrives!** Specifically: There is the requisite praying and beseeching Hashem that the *geulah* come right away to nullify the feeling of **pain and bitterness** (like [the leader of the women in Egypt who was herself called] Miriam, on account of the *mirrur* [bitterness]) for the length of our *golus*, which leads to expressing with a cry from deep within our hearts, “**Ad Masai** (How long)? **Ad Masai? Ad Masai?!**” But together with this, they are also (and most essentially) filled with a feeling of **joy**, the greatest sort of joy that is expressed in song, because they are so firm in their trust that “Right away, he (*Melech Hamoshiach*) is coming” and that he has already come!

In a later sichah: With regard to the prayer for the true and complete Redemption (especially since we are at the point where “all end-times have passed” and we’ve completed all aspects of our *golus* work, as the [Friediker] Rebbe has assured us)—in addition to the sense of yearning, pining, and longing for the *geulah* up to this point, **now** we must also, and most importantly awaken a feeling of joy in the fact that the *geulah* is coming, practically, at this very moment!¹⁹⁰

VISITING THE RUINS

There are various *pessukim* that are recited when seeing the actual vestiges of the *Churban*, in particular:

When viewing evidence of the cities of Yehuda from the time of the

189) *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, p. 307

190) *Ibid.*, p. 320, see fn. 142: “for *simchah* breaks all boundaries, not only those associated with *golus* but also those that impose various limits (in the stages) of the coming *geulah*.”

destruction,¹⁹¹ say,

בְּרוּךְ דָּיָן הַאֲמֵת (without Hashem's Name)

and the verse:

עָרֵי קִדְשׁוֹ הָיוּ מִדְּבָר.¹⁹²

Then you make a small tear in your clothing (*kriah*, see below).

When seeing the site of destruction in the Old City¹⁹³ of Yerushalayim, say,

בְּרוּךְ דָּיָן הַאֲמֵת (without Hashem's Name)

and the remainder of the verse above:

צִיּוֹן מִדְּבָר הִיְתָה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שְׂמֵמָה,

and tear an overgarment again.¹⁹⁴

Beholding the *makom Hamikdash* (the building site)—whether the Kosel or the dome, whichever is viewed first—say,

בְּרוּךְ דָּיָן הַאֲמֵת (without Hashem's Name)

and then the verse following:

בֵּית קִדְשֵׁנוֹ וְתַפְאֳרֵתֵנוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִלְלוּךָ אֲבֹתֵינוּ הָיָה לְשִׁרְפֵת אֵשׁ וְכָל מַחְמַדֵּינוּ הָיָה לְחִרְבָּה,

and ar *kriah* again.

How do you tear *kriah*? You may start with a blade or scissors (a seam may be difficult to tear), but then **manually** extend the rip in your overshirt and/or jacket (but do not tear the *tallis katan* or undershirt) at least a *tefach* (more than 3 inches) in length. Do the ripping only while standing. (You may rent the same garment multiple times [see above], but leave a space of at least three finger-breadths [a bit less than a *tefach*] between each tear).

Kriah is performed even on those days when *Tachanun* is not recited. However, we never perform it on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The rule is that someone who has not seen these sites within the past thirty days performs all the above. However, if they make return visits more often, they only tear *kriah* the first time, or when at least thirty days have lapsed since the last time.

A woman should also tear *kriah* when visiting these sites, but should first tear a garment from beneath her top layer and fasten it (with a pin or the like) and then do the same to the overgarment so as not to expose any skin she normally keeps

191) "Surely many such places are evident even today between Lod and Yerushalayim," the Rebbe writes in a letter.

192) Yeshayahu 64:9

193) There is a difference of opinions regarding places in Yerushalayim outside the city walls.

194) If you visit Yerushalayim first, you do not tear again for other cities' rubble. See [www.asktherav.com #2553](http://www.asktherav.com/#2553) for other details and sources.

covered for *tznius* reasons.

These halachos should not be taken lightly in modern-day Yerushalayim. In fact, the Rebbe has stated¹⁹⁵ that this has become even more important in recent times, to counter the (erroneous) statement that these practices no longer apply after the U.N. charter of 1948 (that established the state of Israel).

HOW SIMCHAH WORKS

"*Simchah* is directly related to the **Geulah**," the Rebbe says in 5748.¹⁹⁶ "The most complete joy ever will come with the true and complete redemption through Moshiach, for all negative things will be **nullified** to the point that 'Hashem will erase the tears from every face.'¹⁹⁷ Moreso, the actual negative experiences themselves will **transform into forces for positivity**, which will strengthen the *simchah* manifold in the most perfect way—a forever joy on their heads."¹⁹⁸

This concept can be derived from the root of the word '*simchah*' itself: שמחה. These three letters are also the root of Moshiach (משיח)...this leads to a unique opportunity and ask: **add in acts of *simchah* to bring Moshiach and the *geulah* in actuality.**

Let's backtrack. Throughout the generations of *golus*, Jews yearned and prayed every single day for the coming of Moshiach; this longing and pining peaked among the holiest Jews and especially the *nesiim* (leaders). Many of them put their lives on the line to try to make it happen sooner (despite the warnings brought in our tradition about the danger of attempting to ameliorate the *golus* endtime), as is brought in *sefarim* of our history. Notwithstanding all these stories, no one came close to the *shturem*, tumult, the (Friediker) Rebbe made regarding the arrival of Moshiach—beginning with his famous announcement (*kol koreh*) published in *Hakriah Vehakedushah* over forty years ago¹⁹⁹: **'Do teshuvah immediately, and be immediately redeemed!'** with an emphasis on the short timeline—right away, actually...

"Now, dozens of years have passed since the initial announcement and *shturem*, and Moshiach is still not here, and the question arises: 'What must we accomplish that has not yet been done!?' I propose that the thing that has not yet been addressed in relation to bringing Moshiach is this: **Working on ourselves to pursue joy in order to bring Moshiach.** For, in addition to the fact that *simchah* breaks through all boundaries, including the limitations of *golus*, *simchah* has a special, practical relationship to bringing the *geulah*.

"What is this connection? As explained in the *Maamar Samach Tesamach*,²⁰⁰ joy with which a mitzvah is performed can reach a higher source in G-dliness than the

195) In 5717 (1957). See *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 15, p. 452. Also *Sichas Shabbos Hagadol* 5730. The Friediker Rebbe also said: "For the destruction of Yerushalayim (by the Romans), we must tear *kriah*; in the modern-day, 'rebuilt' Yerushalayim of theaters and the like, we may tear twice."

196) *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 627

197) *Yeshayahu* 25:8

198) *Yeshayahu* 35:10

199) Now, eighty!

200) Recited by the Rebbe Rashab in 5657 on the occasion of the Friediker Rebbe's wedding.

mitzvah itself, accessing the repository of the essential joy reserved for the Future Era. In previous generations, this joy was an accessory to the mitzvah performance, a result of the manner in which a person fulfilled their service to Hashem.

“In contrast, the type of *simchah* necessary to actually bring Moshiach focuses on the **joy itself** in its purest form; **effort expended on attaining absolute joy** on the level that will make Moshiach’s coming a reality.

“The bottom line in all this, and the practical directive: **Go out and announce that the call of the hour is to add in joy with the express intention of bringing Moshiach.** Surely, through this we will bring Moshiach in actuality, with the greatest alacrity, not lagging even for the momentary blink of an eye—**try it, and see it proven!**”

PRE-SHABBOS PREPS

For *shnayim mikra v’echad targum*,²⁰¹ we read *Parshas V’eschanan*.

Candle lighting is at **7:57 pm** (18 minutes before sunset).

SHABBOS PARSHAS V’ESCHANAN, SHABBOS NACHAMU

Aseres Hadibros: In the reading of the Torah, the second rendition of the *Aseres Hadibros* is read as part of the weekly parshah. The congregation stands for the reading and each person faces the *sefer Torah*.

Haftorah: In the seven weeks from this Shabbos (directly following *Tishah B’av*) until Rosh Hashanah, seven portions from the *Navi* are read, each one offering consolation for the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* (“Sheva D’nechemata”) by prophesying and promising its rebuilding (may it be speedily). The first, this week, from Yeshayahu, begins *Nachamu, Nachamu*.

Q & A

Each week of the seven, the consolements increase in intensity, as the Jewish people beseech Hashem for more comfort—the previous portion having been insufficient. According to the Avudraham, the seven consecutive prophecies can be read as an ongoing conversation between Hashem and the *Yidden*, answering and requesting, respectively:

“***Nachamu, Nachamu ami***,” Hashem tells the *Neviim* in Week One of the seven. “Go and comfort My people.”

“These assurances of the *Neviim* do not assuage us,” the Jewish people reply. As Week Two begins, ***Vatomer Tzion, azavani Hashem***—“Hashem has forsaken me!”

The *Neviim* return to Hashem and say, “The Jewish people have not been reconciled by our assurances.” In Week Three we find verse, ***Aniyah so’arah lo nuchamah***, “poor and tempestuous, she is not comforted!”

²⁰¹ See details of this practice above in the entry for Friday, 18 Tammuz—including *Haftorah* information.

“Alright,” Hashem finally responds in Week Four, “*Anochi, anochi, Hu menachemchem*—I myself, will go and comfort them!”

The Maharil writes, “This Shabbos immediately following *Tishah B’av* is *Shabbos Nachamu*, when the entire nation can rejoice in their trust of the true consolation of Moshiach’s coming.”

Bigger Seudah: It is customary to make a special *seudah* on the Shabbos following *Tishah B’av*; today is comparable to Yom Tov and is a day of consolation. Our celebration should therefore exceed the rest of the *Shabbosim* of the year. Someone who does so merits experiencing the ultimate consolation of the rebuilding of the third *Beis Hamikdash*.

WHAT JOY IS TODAY

“Earlier, we spoke about the greatness of the Shabbos, *Shabbos Nachamu*,” the Rebbe says in 5737.²⁰² “That is represents a double consolation (for in the *possuk* it says, *Nachamu* twice) for we are emerging from the mourning of *Tishah B’av* and we are also approaching the 15th of Av, a day of celebration that comes directly after *Tishah B’av* (and is therefore a study of contrasts) —a day about which the Mishnah says, ‘The Jewish people did not have any Yomim Tovim comparable to the 15th of Av...

“Now, it is true that we can say, ‘nothing remained nowadays from the original celebration of the 15th of Av other than a *minhag* that we do not say *Tachanun*’... However, understandably, we must not minimize the greatness inherent specifically in a *minhag Yisroel*; this is something on par with *Hakafos*, which is also a *minhag*. We know how great a level *Hakafos* can achieve (it is the apex of an entire month of Tishrei holidays), and our celebration of the 15th of Av in our days can have the same advantage.

“So what is it about the 15th of Av, that it is associated with such high levels of joy, to the point of actual dancing, as it states, ‘The daughters of Israel would go out and dance...?’ We know that dance represents an outstanding level of joy (affecting the very extremities of those rejoicing). Within dance, we can achieve a more limited range of movement and joy, but there is a type of dancing that is completely without bounds as well. How can a person, who has physical limitations, dance in a manner that is without limits at all? This is where the circle dance comes in (a form which has no beginning or end) —here we can achieve a kind of dancing that is completely boundless.

“One of the innovations of Chassidim is that they sing—and even dance—on Shabbos (even in *golus*), so let us sing together a *niggun*, perhaps *Lechatchilah Aribor* or *Ufaratzta* or another wordless *niggun* in a manner that is out of bounds. And not in a way that ‘their heart is insincere,’ that while singing, the mind is full of business matters, dollar signs and schemes. Put your whole self into the singing for just the few minutes that we are singing and don’t think stray thoughts. Everyone

202) Roshei Devarim of *Sichas Shabbos Nachamu*, 15 Av

can escape their inner *golus* (limitations) instead of wallowing in the mud, as in the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's famous parable.

“And from the state that is iterated in the *maamar* earlier on the verse, “If you do not know (of your own worth)...²⁰³ we should reach the point of *ad d'lo yada*—a joy that cannot differentiate (between Haman and Mordechai), beyond all limitations and bounds.²⁰⁴

ON THE PRECIPICE

“We are, today, experiencing *Shabbos Nachamu*,” the Rebbe says in 5748,²⁰⁵ “It is in close proximity to the Yom Tov of the 15th of Av, and therefore an extremely opportune time to rectify the whole concept of the *Churban* and subsequent *golus*. In addition (and once adding, let's add more), let us strengthen ourselves even more in our efforts to hurry up the *geulah*, adding one act and another to hasten Moshiach's coming, actually, *mamash!*”

“Specifically (what should we do?)—Let us add in learning Torah (‘add the nights to the days to be fully occupied in Torah’), in both its hidden and revealed aspects, for ‘learning is the greatest as it leads to action’ and also in a more precise and elevated performance of the mitzvos, including, especially, *tzedakah*, which is equal to all other mitzvos.

“In simple words: First, everyone must do their own personal accounting internally with regard to Torah learning, giving *tzedakah* and the performance of all mitzvos in general, whether or not their Divine service is not lacking, on a level as is required according to the letter of the law. Even after achieving some sort of faultlessness, having filled in all that was missing, do not suffice with this, but add more—in both quality and quantity!

[Here, in a footnote, the Rebbe adds: For example, in learning Torah, add both time and material—covering more ground and delving deeper. In *tzedakah*, add in the amount given and also attitude by giving more graciously, and also (in a more permanent way) by upping the percentage—if before you gave *maaser* (10), now give *chomesh* (20), or even more than *chomesh*.]

“The increase should further proliferate (and then grow and grow even more) throughout this time of *Shiva D'nechemta* (extending until Rosh Hashanah, when the new year will bring a new lifeforce even greater than this). So this is not a one-time addition, but an incremental growth from one day to the next throughout this seven-week period.

“It is very clear that we are the last generation of *golus* and the first of *geulah*—similar to those who were on the brink of entering Eretz Yisroel following when, on the 15th of Av (in the fortieth year in the desert), the punishment of those who perished in the desert ceased²⁰⁶ so that those who were present were perfectly ready

203) Shir Hashirim 1:8

204) The end of the *sichah* is not on record.

205) *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 581 ff.

206) This is the first of a series of positive occurrences on the 15th of Av and an aspect of its celebration.

to enter the Land. It is they who are designated in this week's *parshah* as 'all of you, alive today!'²⁰⁷

"Therefore, being so very close to the 15th of Av, a day that emphasizes how very imminently *golus* will be over, where we are in the 'desert of the nations' but 'ready to enter the Land' (and this time) for a *geulah* that will be forever without any exile to ever follow again, we must put special attention on those extra acts connected with the *geulah*'s imminence, including, especially, anticipating, requesting and praying for *geulah* (as, in the *parshah*, Moshe entreated Hashem no less than **515 tefillos** to try to enter Eretz Yisroel and effectuate the Final Redemption)!

"Each one of us must make this personal accounting internally: What have I accomplished thus far in expediting the *geulah*?! Think of this, especially, while envisioning how Moshiach is standing and waiting with bated breath to come redeem *Yidden* after everyone completes the acts dependent on them to hasten his arrival. Since Moshiach himself in all his glory is standing and awaiting your action, it becomes apparent how great the responsibility—and also the tremendous merit—that lies in you!"

DOUBLE & DOUBLE

The Rebbe says in 5749²⁰⁸: The *Haftorah* of *Nachamu, Nachamu*, a double consolation, is the first—and head—of the seven weeks of consolation, therefore containing within it an aspect that is **higher** than all the others. It is then drawn into the weeks that follow, that they too are doubled. Inherent in this is the level of consolation that is higher than any other—the *nechamah* sourced in the very essence of Hashem. How do we create a **kli** (container) to accept this level, that it should be drawn down and revealed, practically contained? We achieve this by a Divine service that incorporates **twice** the effort, both personally and in our acts that affect others—each one doubled.

Pirkei Avos: This week is Perek Gimmel (Chapter 3).²⁰⁹

Shabbos ends at **9:01 pm**

207) Devarim 4:4

208) *Sefer Hasichos* 5749, vol. 2, p. 629 ff.

209) We do not enunciate Hashem's name in the incomplete *pessukim* found in the Mishnah (see entry for *Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*). This week, the verses that this applies to are as follow. In Mishnah 3: starting with *Vayidaber elai*; Mishnah 7: *Elokim nitzav* and *b'kerev Elokim*, also *Az Nedabru*; Mishnah 14: *Ki b'tzelem and Banim atem*.

“Oops! I made a mistake...”

Fast of 17 Tammuz or Tishah B'av 5783

What did I do?	When did I remember?	Now I should...
Amidah Shacharis & Minchah • Fast of 17 Tammuz or Tishah B'av		
Chazzan forgot עננו	before saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah of רפאנו	interrupt and say עננו, then start רפאנו from the beginning
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah of רפאנו	say שמע קולנו in עננו (like in the silent <i>Amidah</i> of Minchah) and conclude with: העונה לעמו ישראל בעת צרה ושומע תפלה ³
	after saying Hashem's name for שומע תפלה	recite it as an independent tefillah after שים שלום
	after concluding the chazzan's repitition	not say it now nor repeat the <i>Amidah</i>
I forgot עננו	after saying Hashem's name for שומע תפלה	say it after אלקי נצור (before the second לרצון יהיו) but without the concluding brachah
	after the second לרצון ² יהיו	not say it now nor repeat the <i>Amidah</i>
I did not continue שומע כי אתה שומע בכל עת צרה וצוקה after	after saying Hashem's name	say שומע תפלה now, and I'm <i>yotzei</i>
I concluded with ברוך אתה ה' העונה לעמו ישראל	within <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	say שומע תפלה.
	after <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	say שמע קולנו again.
I said עננו in a separate ברכה גואל ישראל (like a chazzan) after	/	not repeat it again in שמע קולנו.

Notes

1. If you concluded with שומע תפילה, you are *yotzei*.
2. and you also made the decision not to lengthen your

tefillah with extra requests and supplications.

3. a short span of uninterrupted time it would take to say the words, "*Shalom alecha, Mori v'Rabbi*"

What did I do?	When did I remember?	Now I should...
Rosh Chodesh Amidah • Maariv, Shacharis & Minchah		
forgot יעלה ויבוא ⁴	before saying Hashem's name at the end of המחזיר	interrupt and start יעלה ויבוא
	after המחזיר שכנינתו לציין but before מודים	say יעלה ויבוא now and then continue with מודים In Maariv: do not say it now or start over
	before the second יהיו לרצון ⁵	say רצה now ⁵ In Maariv: do not say it now or start over
	after the second יהיו לרצון ²	start the <i>Amidah</i> ⁶ again ⁷ In Maariv: do not say it now or start over
	(for Shacharis but) after davening Musaf	do not say the Shacharis <i>Amidah</i> again
Musaf Amidah • Rosh Chodesh		
אתה יצרת said	before saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	say ראשי חדשים then start למדני חקיק
	after concluding the middle brachah	do not repeat anything ⁸
Recited the Yom Tov Musaf	before saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	say ראשי חדשים then start למדני חקיק
	after concluding the middle brachah	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after the second יהיו לרצון ²	repeat the <i>Amidah</i> ⁶

Notes

4. or if you are unsure what you said.

5. If you remembered after reciting Hashem's name at the end of brachah the of הטוב שמך or המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום say המחזיר את עמו ישראל בשלום or הטוב שמך and go back to רצה.

6. You must first wait *k'dei hiluch daled amos* (the time it takes to walk six feet) before restarting the *Amidah*.

7. If it's for Shacharis, and you already removed your tefillin, it's proper to don them again before repeating the *Amidah*.

If you remembered after the time has arrived for the next *tefillah*, say the *Amidah*, and then repeat it to make up for the earlier one. The earlier *tefillah* can only be compensated

as long as you are occupied with the following one; once you have finished davening, you are no longer able to make it up. See details (in Hebrew) on [#25750](http://www.asktherav.com)

However, if you erred in Shacharis, and you already recited Musaf, do not repeat the amida.

If, on *motzoei Rosh Chodesh*, you realize that you made a mistake in Minchah that day, you may repeat the *Amidah* after Maariv, but only as a *tefillas nedavah* (a "bonus", i.e., non-obligatory).

8. If you concluded in the correct way with ראשי חדשים ישראל. It is still best to listen to the *chazzan's* repetition with חדשים.

What did I do?	When did I remember?	Now I should...
recited weekday brachos ⁹	before saying Hashem's name at the end of הדעת חונן	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	before the second יהיו לרצון	if it is not yet time to daven Minchah: return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after the second יהיו לרצון ²	if it is late enough to daven Minchah: complete the <i>Amidah</i> ¹⁰ start the <i>Amidah</i> ⁶ again ¹¹
completed the brachah with מקדש השבת וישראל וראשי חדשים	within <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	continue with מקדש ישראל וראשי חדשים
	after <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after the second יהיו לרצון ²	repeat the <i>Amidah</i> ⁶
completed the brachah with מקדש ישראל והזמנים	within <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	continue with מקדש ישראל וראשי חדשים
	after <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	return to ראשי חדשים & continue as usual
	after the second יהיו לרצון ²	repeat the <i>Amidah</i> ⁶
Birchas Hamazon • Rosh Chodesh		
said רצה	before saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	interrupt & go back to רחם
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	not repeat anything ¹²
forgot יעלה ויבוא	before saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	say יעלה ויבוא now
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	conclude the brachah & then say the brachah of ראשי חדשים ¹³
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	After <i>shki'ah</i> on the second day of Rosh Chodesh: conclude the brachah & don't say the brachah of ראשי חדשים
	after saying ברוך in the brachah of הטוב והמטיב	not repeat anything ¹²

Notes

the intent to be *yotzeh* through him.

If you concluded with מקדש השבת וישראל וראשי חדשים within *k'dei dibbur*, say the correct version immediately. If *k'dei dibbur* has passed, go back to ראשי חדשים.

9. If you're unsure if you davened the weekday *Amidah* or *Musaf* for Rosh Chodesh, it is inconclusive whether you should say the *Amidah* again. You should listen to the

chazzan's repetition with the intent to be *yotzeh* through him.

10. This *tefillah* will then be considered Minchah; go back and daven *Musaf*. (You may daven *Musaf* at any time throughout the day.)

11. If it is already possible to daven Minchah, it will be considered as such.

12. If you did not realize that you are not meant to repeat

What did I do?	When did I remember?	Now I should...
mentioned another Yom Tov by mistake	before saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	return to רחם
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	conclude the brachah & then say the brachah of חדשים ¹³
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of בונה ברחמינו ירושלים	After <i>shki'ah</i> on the second day of Rosh Chodesh: conclude the brachah & don't say the brachah of ראשי חדשים
	after saying ברוך in the brachah of הטוב והמטיב	not repeat anything ¹²
said ותחזינה עינינו after יעלה ויבא (as in davening)	before saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	start בונה ירושלים now & continue as usual
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	say בונה ירושלים ¹⁴ then start למדני חקיק
	after concluding המחזיר שכינתנו לציון	return to רחם
Me'ein Shalosh • Shabbos Rosh Chodesh		
forgot to say זוכרנו לטובה בינם ראש החודש הזה	before saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	return to say זוכרנו לטובה & conclude as usual
	after saying Hashem's name at the end of the brachah	do nothing; I am yotzeh
Tishah B'av Amidah Maariv & Shacharis		
said נחם		not repeat anything ¹⁴
Tishah B'av Amidah Shacharis & Minchah		
I forgot עננו - see in the beginning of chart		
Amidah Minchah Tishah B'av		
forgot to say נחם	after saying Hashem's name for the brachah of בונה ירושלים	say it before ותחזינה ¹⁵ without the concluding brachah
	after saying Hashem's name for המחזיר שכינתנו לציון	say it before ועל כולם without the concluding brachah
	after saying Hashem's name for הטוב שמך ולך נאה להודות	say it right before the second לרצון יהיו without the concluding brachah
	after the second לרצון ²	not say it now nor repeat the <i>Amidah</i>
completed the brachah with בונה ירושלים by mistake	within <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	Immediately say מנחם ציון ובונה ירושלים
	after <i>k'dei dibbur</i> ³	not repeat it, I am <i>yotzei</i>

Notes

benching and you started saying it again, stop wherever you are currently holding—even in middle of a brachah.

13. as stated in the siddur (for Rosh Chodesh):

ברוך אתה ה' אלוהינו מלך העולם שנתן ראשי חדשים לעמו ישראל לזכרון without the conclusion.

14. If you concluded the brachah with בונה ברחמינו ירושלים, you are *yotzeh*.

15. Same applies throughout the year.

16. If you said it before את צמח דוד as a brachah on its own, you are *yotzei* (and it is not considered an interruption).