

The Laws of Tisha B'av:

Erev Tisha B'av:

1. Mincha is said earlier than usual, in order to have time to eat the "Seudas Hamafsekes." We will be davening Mincha on **Wednesday, Aug. 2nd at 6:30 P.M.** in the City Playhouse Lobby.
2. No Tachanun is said at Mincha.
3. The final meal before Tisha B'av is called the "Seudah Hamafsekes" and has special requirements. This meal must be eaten after noon with the intention of not eating anything thereafter
4. The Seudah Hamafsekes may be preceded by a regular meal. However, one should not fill himself at this meal, in order to allow room for the Seudas Hamafsekes. One should take at least a 20-30 minute break between the regular meal and the Seudas Hamafsekes.
5. The custom is to eat the Seudas Hamafsekes while seated on the ground. If one is weak, he may sit on a pillow. There is no requirement to remove one's shoes for this meal – since mourning does not begin until evening.
6. The custom is for the Seudas Hamafsekes to consist only of bread, cold hard-boiled eggs, and water. A portion of the bread should be dipped in ashes and eaten. One should say: "This is the Tisha B'av meal."
7. Everyone says the Birchas Hamazon by themselves, when this meal is concluded. Three adult males should avoid eating this meal together in order not to be required to recite the Grace after meals as a "Mezumin" [invitation to bentch].
8. Since mourning does not begin until the evening, one may sit on a chair until sunset.
9. One may eat and drink after this meal until sunset, unless you expressly decided, verbally or mentally, not to eat any more on that day, or said that you are accepting the fast. If one plans on eating or drinking after this meal, it is preferable to either verbally or mentally express that you are not accepting the fast until sunset.

Tisha B'av Evening:

10. All the prohibitions of Tisha B'av begin just prior to sunset. **Sunset is at 8:40 P.M.** this year [2006].
11. One is permitted to drive to Shul and sit normally in the car.
12. On Tisha B'av it is prohibited to:
 - Eat or drink
 - Bathe or wash for pleasure
 - Anoint oneself
 - Have intimate relations
 - Wear leather shoes
 - Learn Torah [except for those portions which sadden the heart.
13. You should deprive yourself somewhat from a comfortable sleep - i.e. to sleep with no pillows or one pillow less than usual.

Eating & Drinking:

14. A person, who is sick, or an old or weak person who may become ill if he does not eat or drink [even if his illness will not endanger his life] is permitted to eat as much food as he usually does.
15. A woman up to thirty days after giving birth [even if the baby was stillborn] is also permitted to eat. She should try to postpone eating for a few hours, unless this causes undue hardship.
16. A pregnant and nursing woman [thirty days after giving birth] should fast the entire day even if they are suffering. However, if they are suffering greatly [even if there is no danger to life], they should discontinue fasting. In all cases of doubt, contact your Rabbi.
17. A person with only a headache or similar discomfort is required to fast.
18. If a person is not required to fast because it is dangerous, he is prohibited from fasting.
19. Boys under the age of 13 and girls under the age of 12 are not required to fast at all.

20. Swallowing capsules, bitter medicine tablets, or bitter liquid medicine without water is permitted. According to some opinions, it is permitted to swallow a bit of water along with the medication if the medication can not be swallowed otherwise.
21. Even those people, who are not required to fast, should not indulge or eat more than is necessary to preserve their health.
22. One, who is accustomed to rinse his mouth or teeth daily, may do so only in instance if the bad taste in his mouth causes him **great distress. Since care must be taken not to swallow the water, he should bend over when rinsing.**

Bathing & Washing:

23. All washing for pleasure on any part of the body is prohibited.
24. You may wash your hands or other portions of your body if they are dirtied or stained. You may only wash the dirty or soiled portions, but not beyond the soiled area.
25. Upon awakening in the morning, you may wash your hands in the usual manner [three times alternately on each hand]. **However, you should be careful not to wash further than the joints at the end of your fingers.** While your hands are still moist after drying them, you may pass them over your eyes. If your eyes contain glutinous substances, you may wash them.
26. You are permitted to wash your hands after using the bathroom and/or touching a part of your body that is normally covered. You should not wash further than the joints at the end of your fingers.
27. You are permitted to wash your hands before davening. You should not wash further than the joints at the end of your fingers.
28. If you are cooking or preparing food on Tisha B'av, you may wash a piece of meat and the like – if necessary – even if your hands will get wet.
29. Washing for medical reasons is permitted.
30. A woman may wash the parts of her body which must be washed before beginning her Seven Clean Days. A woman may not go to the Mikveh on Tisha B'av – but may go to the Mikveh the night after.
31. It is prohibited to cool yourself by placing your face or other portions of your body against a pitcher or other utensil containing water. However, you may cool yourself by placing a cool empty utensil, fruit, and the like against your face.

Anointing / Intimacy:

32. You may not rub or apply onto your body any substance – liquid or solid – commonly applied to the body. Therefore, you may not apply onto your body oil, soap, hair tonic, or cream, ointment, perfume and the like.
33. You are permitted to anoint for medical reasons such as skin conditions.
34. The use of deodorant or anti-perspirant to remove a bad odor is permitted.
35. Since intimacy is prohibited, a husband and wife may not even touch each other.

Wearing Leather Shoes:

36. It is prohibited to wear shoes that are made, even partially, out of leather.
37. Shoes made out of cloth, wood, rubber, plastic and the like are permitted.
38. Wearing leather shoes is permitted in the case of:
 - A person who has to walk a long distance over stones or mud, and no other suitable footwear is available.
 - Medical reasons.
 - Children who are too young to understand about the destruction of the Temple.

Learning Torah:

39. The heart rejoices from the study of Torah. Therefore you are prohibited to learn or teach Torah – except for those topics which are relevant to Tisha B'av and mourning.

40. A Rav may rule only in those questions of Halacha which are required for Tisha B'av.
41. You are permitted to prepare the Torah reading for Tisha B'av.
42. You may say Tehillim for sick people or for the presently dangerous situation in Eretz Yisroel.

Other prohibitions for the entire day:

43. It is extremely important to stay focused on the serious nature of the day by staying in touch with your soul and not being distracted by other physical things. Therefore, there are additional prohibitions.
44. **Tisha B'av is not a time for socializing, idle chatter, schmoozing and the like.**
45. You are prohibited to greet someone. Not only is enquiring after one's well-being prohibited, but even greeting a person with "good morning" and the like is prohibited. One, who is greeted, should respond softly – to show that greeting is prohibited.
46. It is prohibited to give gifts. However, you may give a gift to a poor person.
47. Taking a walk or a trip for pleasure is prohibited.

Prohibitions until Halachik Mid-day – 1:24 P.M.:

48. It is prohibited to sit on a chair or bench that is 12" or higher. One may sit on the floor – even a cushion or on a low bench or chair.
49. Any type of work which requires time to do is prohibited. This applies to skilled and unskilled labor. Even housework should be postponed until after Halachik Mid-day. Wherever possible, it should not be done the entire day.
50. If at all possible, one should avoid going to work / business the entire day. If one must go to work, it should be after Halachik mid-day. **The Rabbis say that he who works on Tisha B'av will see no blessing from the money earned.**
51. **Preparation for the meal after Tisha B'av should not take place until after Halachik Mid-day.**

Talis & Tefillin:

52. The Talis and Tefillin are not worn at Shacharis. Your Talis Koton [Tzitzis] should be put on in the morning, and you may make a blessing on it. Many have a custom to leave the Tzitzis under one's clothes until after Halachik mid-day.
53. The Talis and Tefillin are worn for Mincha.

Other Customs:

54. There is a custom to visit a cemetery after completion of the morning services.
55. There is a custom to wash the floors and clean the house in the afternoon. The custom is based on a tradition that Moshiach will be born on Tisha B'av afternoon and that it is therefore appropriate to commemorate the redemption and strengthen people's hopes and prayers.

Restrictions on the 10th of Av:

56. All the restrictions of the 3 weeks and the Nine Days continue until Halachik Mid-day of the 10th of Av.
57. Since Tisha B'av falls out this year on a Thursday, you are permitted to take a shave/haircut and wash clothes on Thursday night – in honor of Shabbos.
58. Since Tisha B'av falls out this year on a Thursday, you should delay saying Kiddush Levana until Motzei Shabbos.
 - **The fast and Tisha B'av restrictions end at 9:28 P.M. on Thursday evening.**
 - The Talmud teaches that "Whoever mourns over Jerusalem will merit to see her happiness, and whoever does not mourn over Jerusalem will not merit to see her happiness, May we all merit to experience the happiness of Jerusalem soon!