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Tisha B’Ab - באב תשעה

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

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The [three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) week period between [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\tamuz17.html) 17 and Ab (Ashkenazim say [Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html)) 9 is called Bein HaMetzarim “between the troubles”. In a previous paper we [studied](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) the fast of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\tamuz17.html) 17. Now we are going to jump forward through [three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) weeks of profound trouble to [study](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) the fast of the 9th of Ab.

Originally, Yom Teruah was to occur on the seventeenth of [Tammuz](feasts.html) and [Yom Kippur](kippur.html)im on the [ninth](nine.html) of [Av](feasts.html), as the sages assert.[[1]](#footnote-1) Yom Teruah is the day of man’s [creation](bara.html), as we say in the [prayers](prayer.html) of Yom Teruah, “This day is the beginning of Your works, the remembrance of the [First](one.html) Day,” and the seventeenth of [Tammuz](feasts.html) was to be the true day of man’s [creation](bara.html). The Creator had formed man to live eternally in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html), but man sinned. On the seventeenth of [Tammuz](feasts.html), the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People were to receive the [First](one.html) Tablets.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Tisha B’Ab is the [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) [name](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) of the fast of the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) month. Tisha B’Ab is the way “the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab” is said in the [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) language. Ab is the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) month of the Biblical year:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. [Nisan](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) ([Abib](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html)) | 7. [Tishri](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) (Ethanim) |
| 2. [Iyar](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) (Zif) | 8. Cheshvan |
| 3. [Sivan](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) | 9. [Kislev](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) |
| 4. [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) | 10. Tevet |
| **5. Ab** | 11. [Shevat](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) |
| 6. [Elul](file:///D:\Word\Av\elul.html) | 12. [Adar](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) |

The fast of the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) month is mentioned only obliquely in the Tanach[[3]](#footnote-3). This fast of the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) month is mentioned in:

***Zechariah 7:1-7*** *In the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *year of King Darius, the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *came to Zechariah on the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *day of the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *month, the month of* [*Kislev*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html)*. The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech, together with their men, to entreat* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *By asking the* [*priests*](file:///D:\Word\Av\priests.html) *of the house of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty and the prophets, “Should I* [*mourn*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) *and fast in the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *month, as I have done for so many years?” Then the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty came to me: “Ask all the people of the land and the* [*priests*](file:///D:\Word\Av\priests.html)*, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *and seventh months for the past* [*seventy*](file:///D:\Word\Av\seventy.html) *years, was it really for me that you fasted? And when you were* [*eating*](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) *and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves? Are these not the words* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *proclaimed through the earlier prophets when* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?’“*

In the above verse we see the elders inquiring as to whether they are to *continue* the fast of the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) month, but, we never see this fast being given in the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) place. This is a bit odd. Odder yet is this verse in the Tanach:

***Zechariah 8:18-19*** *Again the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty came to me. This is what* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty says: “The fasts of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html)*,* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html)*, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy* [*festivals*](file:///D:\Word\Av\festivals.html) *for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”*

Let’s see how the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) views this passage:

[***Rosh HaShana***](file:///D:\Word\Av\teruah.html) ***18b*** *Why should they not also go forth to report* [*Tammuz*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) *and Tebeth seeing that R. Hanah b. Bizna has said in the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of R. Simeon the Saint: ‘What is the meaning of the verse, Thus had said the Lord of Hosts: The fast of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *month and the fast of the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness? The prophet calls these days both days of fasting and days of joy, signifying that when there is peace they shall be for joy and gladness, but if there is not peace they shall be fast days’! — R. Papa replied: What it means is this: When there is peace they shall be for joy and gladness; if there is persecution, they shall be fast days; if there is no persecution but yet not peace, then those who* [*desire*](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) *may fast and those who* [*desire*](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) *need not fast. If that is the case, the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of Ab also [should be optional]? — R. Papa replied: The* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of Ab is in a different category, because several misfortunes happened on it, as a Master has said: On the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of Ab the* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *was destroyed both the* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)[*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) *and the second* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html)*, and Bethar was captured and the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *[*[*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*] was ploughed.*

*It has been* [*taught*](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html)*: R. Simeon said: There are* [*four*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *expositions among those given by R. Akiba with which I do not agree. [He said]: ‘The fast of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *month‘ — this is the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of* [*Tammuz*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html)*, on which a breach was made in the walls of the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*, as it says, On the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *month on the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of the month the* [*famine*](file:///D:\Word\Av\famine.html) *was sore in the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*, so that there was no bread for the people of the land, and a breach was made in the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*. Why is it called* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html)*? As being* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *in the order of months. ‘The fast of the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *month’: this is the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *of Ab, on which the House of our God was burnt. Why is it called* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html)*? as being* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *in the order of months. ‘The fast of the seventh month’: this is the* [*third*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *of* [*Tishri*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) *on which* [*Gedaliah*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gedaliah.html) *the son of Ahikam was killed. Who killed him? Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed him; and [the fact that a fast was instituted on this day] shows that the death of the righteous is put on a level with the burning of the House of our God. Why is it called the seventh? As being the seventh in the order of months. ‘The fast of the tenth month’: this is the* [*tenth of Tebet*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tevet10.html)*h on which the king of* [*Babylon*](file:///D:\Word\Av\bavel.html) *invested* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*, as it says, And the word of the Lord came unto me in the* [*ninth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) *year in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, saying, Son of man, write thee the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of the day, even of this selfsame day; this selfsame day the king of* [*Babylon*](file:///D:\Word\Av\bavel.html) *hath invested* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*. Why is it called the tenth? As being the tenth in the order of months. [It might be asked], should not this have been mentioned* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)*? Why then was it mentioned in this place [last]? So as to arrange the months in their proper order. I, however, [continued R. Simeon], do not explain thus. What I say is that ‘the fast of the tenth month, is the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *of Tebeth on which news came to the Captivity that the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *had been smitten, as it says, And it came to pass in the* [*twelfth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) *year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *day of the month, that* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *who had escaped out of* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *came to me saying, The* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *is smitten, and they put the day of the report on the same footing as the day of burning. My view is more probable than his, because I make the* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *[mentioned by the prophet]* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *[chronologically] and the last last, whereas he makes the* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *last and the last* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)*, he, however, following [only] the order of months I [also follow] the order of calamities.*

So, we have a fast that is assumed by the Tanach, yet we never see this fast being intiated in the Tanach. This fast was decreed by Chazal, our Sages, as a response to the tragedies that befell us on this day. And [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) has harkened to their words.

The [four](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) fasts mentioned in Zechariah are:

Asarah B’Tevet ([Tevet 10](file:///D:\Word\Av\tevet10.html) - winter), when the siege of the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html), by the Babylonians, began.

Shiv’ah Asar B’[Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) ([Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\tamuz17.html) 17 - summer), when the walls of the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) were breached, several years after the beginning of the siege;

Tisha B’Ab (Ab 9 - summer), when the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Tzom G’daliah ([Tishri](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) 3 - fall) when the Judean governor was assassinated in an Ammonite-generated plot. This brought about the end of [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) autonomy under the Babylonians.

In Zechariah, [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) is indicating that these fast days were appropriate and that these days of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) will be turned into days of joy. The scriptures are strangely quiet on where these fasts began, and on the reasons for these fasts. Never the less, it is obvious that [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) approves of these fasts of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) and that some day He will wipe away our [tears](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) and turn these days into days of joy. The Nazarean Codicil alludes to this change:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 5:4*** *Blessed [are] they that* [*mourn*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html)*: for they shall be comforted.*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](file:///D:\Word\Av\luke.html)***) 6:19-21*** *And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed [them] all. And he lifted up his* [*eyes*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *on his disciples, and said, Blessed [be ye] poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed [are ye] that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed [are ye] that* [*weep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *now: for ye shall* [*laugh*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*.*

***Yochanan (John) 16:19-20*** *Now* [*Yeshua*](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html)[*knew*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall* [*weep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *and lament, but the* [*world*](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html) *shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

When the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html), The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), will be built, [physically](file:///D:\Word\Av\physical.html), the fasts will cease and instead become days of joy. It is likely that Tisha B’Ab will be observed even when the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) is [standing](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) until there is a divine [sign](file:///D:\Word\Av\signs.html) of approval, that [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) once again [desires](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) our sacrifices and [wants](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) to have His Presence rest in the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html).

Tisha B’Ab, the 9th of Ab, falls exactly [three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) weeks (21 days) after Shiv’ah ‘Asar B’[Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and these [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) dates are always very closely linked in history. The [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) records the beginning of this period of tragedy:

***Ta’anith 26b*** *“*[*Five*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *things befell our* [*fathers*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fathers.html) *on the 17th of* [*Tammuz*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) *and* [*five*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *on the 9th of Ab. On the 17th of* [*Tammuz*](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) *the Tablets [of the* [*Ten*](file:///D:\Word\Av\ten.html)[*Commandments*](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html)*] were broken, and the Daily Whole-*[*offering*](file:///D:\Word\Av\korbanot.html) *ceased, and the* [*City*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *was breached, and Apostomus burnt the Torah, and an* [*idol*](file:///D:\Word\Av\idolatry.html) *was set up in the* [*Sanctuary*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html)*.*

All [five](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) of the tragedies which our Hakhamim date to Shiv’ah ‘Asar B’[Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) are disruptions of the promise of [Sinai](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html), regressions from the intimacy we enjoyed when [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) revealed Himself to us. The breaking of the tablets, the burning of the Torah and the construction of an [idol](file:///D:\Word\Av\idolatry.html) in the [Sanctuary](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) were clear “rollbacks” from [Sinai](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html). The [Korban](file:///D:\Word\Av\korbanot.html) HaTamid and the regular [study](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) of Torah (protecting the walls of the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)) represents something about [Sinai](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html), and these were also suspended or lost on the fateful day of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\tamuz17.html) 17.

The [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) then records the end of this period of tragedy:

***Mishnah, Taanith 4:6*** *On the 9th of Ab it was decreed against our* [*fathers*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fathers.html) *that they should not enter into the Land, and the* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *was destroyed the* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *and the second* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html)*, and Beth-Tor was captured and the* [*City*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *was ploughed up. When Ab comes in, gladness must be diminished.”*

All [five](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) of the tragedies listed which occurred on Tisha B’Ab were rejections or disruptions of the national hope and promise of sovereignty in the land.

Whenever the Tannaim (Hakhamim of the Mishnaic period) present an ordered list (i.e. when they introduce that list with the [number](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html) of items to appear), it indicates a significance to that [number](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html). This does not mean that there is a mystical import (although there may well be), but that if [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) parallel lists are presented, both with the same [number](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html) of items and both “ordered”, the symmetry indicates a parallel (or opposing) relationship between the [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html). The Prophet Yeshayahu puts our [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) lists together:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:1-4*** *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*. And it shall come to pass in the* [*last days*](file:///D:\Word\Av\lastdays.html)*, [that] the mountain of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all* [*nations*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html) *shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*, to the house of the G-d of* [*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html)*; and he will* [*teach*](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html) *us of his ways, and we will* [*walk*](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) *in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the* [*law*](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html)*, and the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *from* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*. And he shall judge among the* [*nations*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html)*, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks:* [*nation*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html) *shall not lift up sword against* [*nation*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html)*, neither shall they learn war any more.*

What are these things of which the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) speaks? The 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and the 9th of Ab are linked together historically as days on which Israel has been punished for [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html).

To discover why Tisha B’Ab was a fast day and a day of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html); it is necessary to examine, in greater detail, the [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) that occurred on this date in history.

On Tisha B’Ab, [five](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) nationalcalamities occurred:

**1.** During the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of Moshe, [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the [twelve](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) spies, and the decree was issued forbidding them from entering the [land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html):

[***Sotah***](file:///D:\Word\Av\hair.html) ***35a*** *Then all the congregation raised a loud* [*cry*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*, and the people wept that night. Rabbah said in the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of R. Yohanan: That night was Tisha B’Ab; The Holy* [*One*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)*, blessed be He, said: They cried for naught, I will establish for them [this night as] a* [*weeping*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *for* [*generations*](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html)*.*

**2.** The [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was destroyed by the [Babylonian](file:///D:\Word\Av\bavel.html)’s [fire](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html), led by Nebuchadnezzar. 100,000 [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were slaughtered and millions more [exiled](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html). A year after the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was burned, Micah 3:12 was fulfilled, according to the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Ta’anit 4:6:

***Micah 3:12*** *Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed [as] a field, and* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.*

***Ta’anit 4:6***[*Five*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *things happened to our forefathers on the 17th of Tamuz and* [*five*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) *on the 9th of Ab. On the 17th of Tamuz, the Tablets were broken, the Daily Offerings were stopped,* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *was breached, Apostamos burnt the Torah, and a graven image was placed in the* [*Sanctuary*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html)*. On the 9th of Ab, our forefathers were sentenced not to enter Eretz Yisrael, the* [*First*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)[*Beit HaMikdash*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) *was destroyed, the Second* [*Beit HaMikdash*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) *was destroyed, Betar was captured, and* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *was plowed over*

***Arachin 11b*** *Come and hear: R. Jose said, Good things are brought about on a good [auspicious] day, and evil ones on a bad one. It is said,*

*The day on which the first Temple was destroyed was the ninth of Ab,*

*and it was at the going out of the Sabbath,*

*and at the end of the seventh [Sabbatical] year.*

*The [priestly] guard was that of Jehojarib, the priests and Levites were standing on their platform singing the song. What song was it? And He hath brought upon them their iniquity, and will cut them off in their evil. They had no time to complete [the psalm with] ‘The Lord our God will cut them off’, before the enemies came and overwhelmed them. The same happened the second time [the second Sanctuary's destruction]. Now what need was there for song? Would you say that it was on account of the [daily] burnt-offering? But that could not be, for on the seventeenth of Tammuz the continual sacrifice had been abolished. Hence it was on account of a freewill burnt-offering! But how could you think so? Why should an obligatory-offering have been impossible and a freewill-offering available? — That is no difficulty: A young ox may accidentally have come to them!*

**3.** The Romans, led by Titus destroyed the Second [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html). Some [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) million [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) died, and another [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) million were [exiled](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), according to the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Ta’anit 4:6.



In 70 CE the Roman army laid siege to [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) and on the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) the daily [sacrifice](file:///D:\Word\Av\korbanot.html) was again stopped:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)***) 28:6*** *[It is] a continual* [*burnt offering*](file:///D:\Word\Av\korbanot.html)*, which was ordained in mount* [*Sinai*](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html) *for a sweet savour, a* [*sacrifice*](file:///D:\Word\Av\korbanot.html) *made by* [*fire*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*.*

Roman centurions on the 9th of Ab burned the Second [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html). The extreme heat of the [fire](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html) caused gold of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) to melt and run in to the cracks and crevices between the stones. When the [fire](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html) cooled the Roman soldiers used wedges and crowbars to overturn every stone in their search for the gold.

There are [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) [letters](file:///D:\Word\Av\letters.html) in the [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) alphabet. There are [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) days from the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) up to and including the 9th of [Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html). Throughout history, these have been days of destruction in the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) [calendar](file:///D:\Word\Av\calendar.html). These are the days when the stones of the buildings are taken apart. Mystically, we should understand the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) as the destruction of the [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html), composed of all Israel. When we (Israel) bring disunity to the [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) it is manifested in the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) which represents [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html)’s [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html).

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) year later on the 9th of Ab the Romans plowed the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) mount and the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) to prepare the area to be turned into a Roman colony.

***Micah 3:12*** *“Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field,* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *will become a heap of rubble, and the* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *hill, a mound overgrown with thickets.”*

[Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) alludes to the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) and its subsequent rebuilding in [three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) (days) thousand years:

***Marqos (Mark) 14:58*** *We heard him say, I will destroy this* [*temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *that is made with* [*hands*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html)*, and within* [*three*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *days I will build another made without* [*hands*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html)*.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 17:23*** *And they shall kill him, and the* [*third*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *day he shall be raised again…*

***Yochanan (John 2:18-22)*** *Then answered the* [*Jews*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) *and said unto him, What* [*sign*](file:///D:\Word\Av\signs.html) *shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?* [*Yeshua*](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html) *answered and said unto them, Destroy this* [*temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)*, and in* [*three*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *days I will raise it up. Then said the* [*Jews*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html)*,* [*Forty*](file:///D:\Word\Av\forty.html) *and* [*six*](file:///D:\Word\Av\six.html) *years was this* [*temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *in building, and wilt thou rear it up in* [*three*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *days? But he spake of the* [*temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *of his* [*body*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html)*. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which* [*Yeshua*](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html) *had said.*

**4.** The Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) of Betar, the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html)’ last stand against the Romans, was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were slaughtered, according to the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Ta’anit 4:6.

**5.** The Roman general Turnus Rufus plowed under the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) area and its surroundings. [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) was rebuilt as a pagan [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html), renamed Aelia Capitolina, and access was forbidden to [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html), according to the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Ta’anit 4:6.

This section was excerpted and edited from a work of Rav Yitzchak Etshalom.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Whenever the Tannaim (Rabbis of the Mishnaic period) present an ordered list (i.e. when they introduce that list with the number of items to appear), especially in non-Halakhic literature, it indicates a signficance to that number. This does not mean that there is a mystical import (although there may well be), but that if two parallel lists are presented, both with the same number of items and both "ordered", the symmetry indicates a parallel (or opposing) relationship between the two.

The placement of these two "themes" and their lists of tragedies in juxtaposition implies a continuum from one to the other. This sequenced relationship is more clearly evidenced by the tradition that we have to regard the time period between Shiv'ah 'Asar b'Tammuz and Tish'ah b'Av as a unit, marked by customs of mourning.[[5]](#footnote-5)

From this Mishnah (and our analysis & comments), we can infer four points:

a) Each of these days has a "theme".

b) This "theme" explains the inclusion of all five items on each list.

c) There is a parallel relationship between the two. (It is not an "opposing" relationship as the two sets are not presented as antitheses, rather they are all of one type - tragedy).

d) There is a continuum between the two "themes".

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rejection of the Sinai Connection** | **Tammuz 17** | **Rejection of Tzion** | **Tisha B’Ab** |
| Sinai was a Chuppah. We were unfaithful under the chuppah. | **The "Luchot," the tablets upon which the** [**Ten**](ten.html)[**Commandments**](cmds613.html) **were engraved, were broken by Moshe.** | They cried for naught, I will establish for them [this night as] a weeping for generations.[[6]](#footnote-6)  In other words, the wailing was the event that shaped the nature of Tish'ah b'Av. Just as we found in regards to Shiv'ah 'Asar b'Tammuz, the tragedies of Tish'ah b'Av are rooted in our desert sojourn.  Indeed, their eager acceptance of the scouts' negative report was tantamount to a rejection of the "pleasant land", the Land which HaShem had promised them, flowing with milk and honey and all manners of blessing. | **Our forefathers were sentenced not to enter the land of Israel because of the spies.** |
| **Bamidbar (Numbers) 28:6** It is a continual burnt-offering, which was offered in mount Sinai, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto HaShem.  The daily Tamid was to be a reminder and recovenanting of the B'rit Sinai - the covenant of Sinai. | **The** [**Korban**](korbanot.html) **Tamid, the continual daily** [**sacrifice**](korbanot.html)**, was discontinued.** | The destruction of the Batei Mikdash and the rejection of the Land are of a type - they both belong to the de-evolution of a different mission from that established at Sinai. | **The** [**First**](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)[**Temple**](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) **was destroyed by the** [**Babylonian**](file:///D:\Word\Av\bavel.html)**’s.** |
| The protection of the city comes not from its military might, rather from its scribes, teachers and students of Torah. A breach in the protection of Torah. every time that we engage in Torah study, we are effectively reenacting the Sinai experience.[[7]](#footnote-7)  The study of Torah (saying the Shema) parallels the Korban haTamid - it is an ongoing Mitzvah which has two time-foci: Morning and evening. The lapse of study which allowed the breach of the city walls is of a type with the suspension of the Korban haTamid - the cessation of the "day-and-night" worship of HaShem, originated at Sinai. | **The wall around the** [**city of Jerusalem**](city.html) **was breached.** | The destruction of the Batei Mikdash and the rejection of the Land are of a type - they both belong to the de-evolution of a different mission from that established at Sinai.  We can now understand why the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash belongs with the rejection of the Land. One common interpretation of the behavior of the scouts and the reaction of the people, was that they did not want to enter the Land because they knew that that would spell the end of their intimate relationship with HaShem. They would become a nation among nations - with the responsibility of ethical leadership among them. The destruction of the Batei Mikdash - ideally the world-wide center for HaShem's instruction through the Jewish people (keep in mind that the Sanhedrin was seated right in the Beit haMikdash in the "office of hewn stone") - meant the (temporary) suspension of the opportunity to completely fulfill this responsibility. The fall of Beitar and the plowing of the city were, again, seemingly fatal blows to our national destiny and opportunity. | **The Second** [**Temple**](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) **was destroyed.** |
| That great gift which we received in the desert, among protective flames, now went up in flames.  This is a clear "regression" from Sinai. That great gift which we received in the desert, among protective flames, now went up in flames. This is a clear disruption of the Sinaitic experience. | **Apostamus burnt the** [**Torah scroll**](letters.html)**.** | Bar-Kokhba ("son of the star" - held Messianic hopes for the people. We lost sovereignty over Eretz Israel.  Roughly seventy years after the destruction of the second Temple, the great rebellion led by Bar-Kokhba ("son of the star" - later renamed "Bar Koziba" - the "son of deceit") held Messianic hopes for the people. Even the great R. Akiva considered Bar Kokhba to be the Mashiach and carried his weapons.[[8]](#footnote-8) Not only was the timing of the rebellion possibly inspired by the model of the Babylonian exile, in which there were only seventy years during which the Temple Mount lay fallow - but it was chiefly the attempt to regain Jewish sovereignty over our Land. The crushing of this hope was certainly similar to the decree against our ancestors, denying them entrance into - and sovereignty over - the Land. | **Betar was captured.** |
| It was not just the establishment of an idol that was the tragedy - it was the placement of this idol in the Sanctuary - just like the abomination of the golden calf was its placement at the foot of Sinai in the wake of the Revelation. | **An idolatrous image was placed in the** [**Beit HaMikdash**](mikdash.html)**, the** [**Holy Temple**](temple.html)**.** | This "final" tragedy was certainly of a type with the sentence against our ancestors. Keeping in mind that Yerushalayim is not only a spiritual center, it is also our political capitol, the plowing under of the city represented the final blow to our hopes for sovereignty in the Land. | **The Roman general Turnus Rufus plowed under the** [**Temple**](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) **area and its surroundings.** |
| All five of the tragedies which the Rabbis date to **Shiv'ah 'Asar b'Tammuz** are disruptions of the promise of Sinai - regressions from the intimacy we enjoyed when HaShem first revealed Himself to us. The breaking of the tablets, the burning of the Torah and the construction of an idol in the Sanctuary were clear "rollbacks" from Sinai. The Korban haTamid and the regular study of Torah (protecting the walls of the city) represents something about Sinai - and these were also suspended or lost on the fateful day of Shiv'ah 'Asar b'Tammuz. | | All five of the tragedies listed which occured on **Tish'ah b'Av** were rejections or disruptions of B'rit Tziyyon - the national hope and promise of sovereignty in the Land. | |
| First, we were to fulfill B'rit Sinai, maintaining and constantly strenghtening our exclusive relationship with HaShem - and we are also to fulfill B'rit Tzion, using that special relationship to teach and inspire the world.  This is the tragedy of these three weeks - our failure in both regards, one leading to the next. It is not for naught that the traditions of our people have created a sense of continuity between these two fast days - they are, indeed, a sequence which we must reverse, through the introspection and Teshuvah motivated by a fast.[[9]](#footnote-9)  The role of the Beit haMikdash as an international focus is not only found in the prophecy regarding HaShem's instruction; it will ultimately be a prayer-center for the entire world:  "...For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."[[10]](#footnote-10)    May this be the last year when these fasts remain days of sadness:  "Thus says HaShem of hosts: The fast of the fourth month (Tammuz), and the fast of the fifth (Av), and the fast of the seventh (Tishri), and the fast of the tenth (Tevet), shall be seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful festivals for the house of Yehudah: therefore love truth and peace." | | | |

Several other calamitous [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) took place on Tisha B’Ab:

**1.** [Esau](file:///D:\Word\Av\edom.html) confronted [Jacob](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html), on his return to Canaan. Genesis 33:1ff. Rashal Bereshit Vayish quoted in [Seder](file:///D:\Word\Av\haggada.html) HaDorot. This [event](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) in [Jacob](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html)’s life is a prophecy for his descendants. This confrontation speaks of the ultimate confrontation in the [end of days](file:///D:\Word\Av\lastdays.html).

**2.** Pope Urban II declared the [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) Crusade. Tens of thousands of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were killed, and many [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) [communities](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html) obliterated.

**3.** In 1290 King Edward I ordered the expulsion of all [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from England on the 9th of Ab. (And they did not regain the right to settle there again until 1657.)

**4.** The Spanish Inquisition culminated with the expulsion of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from Spain on Tisha B’Ab in 1492. This is the same date on which Christopher Columbus (himself a [Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html)) set sail.

**5.** [World](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html) War [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) broke out on Tisha B’Ab in 1914 when Russia declared war on Germany. German resentment from the war set the stage for the Holocaust.

**6.** On Tisha B’Ab, deportation began of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from the Warsaw Ghetto.

**7**. The Gulf war started on the 9th of Ab, when Saddam Hussein went to war against Kuwait and in the months that followed proceeded to hurl his 39 missiles at Israel.

**As a side note:** The only observed collision between a planet and another solar [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) began on Tisha B’Ab, a [Sabbath](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html). Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 began slamming into the surface of the planet Jupiter, [known](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) in [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) as Zedek, the righteous [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html). This [event](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) may have connections to the other Tisha B’Ab [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html). On July 17 (Tisha B’Ab) 1994, the planet Jupiter was struck by 21 fragments of a comet. The comet (Shoemaker-Levy 9) collided with this planet... likely fulfilling [Luke](file:///D:\Word\Av\luke.html) 21:26, where [Yeshua](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html) says that, prior to his return the “heavenly [bodies](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) would be shaken.” Is all this coincidence? I don’t think so. Jupiter was the high-god of Rome, it was the [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) whose [temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) replaced [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s house in [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) and whose [name](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) (Capitolina) adorned the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) for centuries. Jupiter (also [known](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) as Marduk to Babylonians) was the high god of Zoroastrianism, the religion of Nebudchenezzar (who had the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) burned in 586b c). See the [connection](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html)? [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) had symbolic “revenge” on Rome -and- [Babylon](file:///D:\Word\Av\bavel.html) through Jupiter (high god of both empires), when the planet was pummeled on this fitting anniversary in 1994 (5754 A.M.).

So, why do we fast on the 9th? Before the [Gemara](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) addresses this question, it mentions the opinion of Hakham Yochanan on this topic:

***Taanit 29a*** R’ Yochanan said that *“If I had been present at the* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) *when the Sages established the day as a fast, I would have established the 10th of Ab as the day of the fast, as that was the day the* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *burnt for the most part.”*

The Sages disagreed and felt that the fast should be on the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html). The [Gemara](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) explains that the opinion of the Sages was that it was better to fix the commemoration according to the beginning of the calamity (the 9th of Ab, when the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) set on [fire](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html)), rather than according to the day on which the unfolding of the calamity itself occurred for the most part.

The fast of the 9th of Ab is a “hard” fast in terms of importance and in severity of restrictions. It is second only to the fast of Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html).

Since these tragedies occurred on Tisha B’Ab, the Sages decreed this day as a fast day. The restrictions on the 9th of Ab are more severe than the other fast days ordained by the Sages.

According to [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) tradition, the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) day of the [fifth](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) month is the saddest day on the Biblical [calendar](file:///D:\Word\Av\calendar.html). This day of solemn reflection and fasting has been observed since the destruction of Solomon’s [temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html). It is still observed today.

Why did so many tragedies befall us on the same date?

The [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) reveals to us the answer to this question:

***Ta’anit 29a*** *“Reward is saved for a day of* [*merit*](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html)*, and destruction is saved for a day of guilt”*

According to the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html). Because our forefathers committed such a terrible [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) on the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab in the days of Moshe, the day became [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) reserved for destruction. Every year, when that day comes around, the original [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of our forefathers is brought back to light. Since we have not yet fully corrected their misdeeds, [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) may not extend to us His usual lovingkindness on that day, leaving us vulnerable to impending adversity. The [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab has thus become a “weak link” in the chain of [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) history.

The Sages of the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html), in Sanhedrin 90a, tell us that whenever [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) punishes someone it is always done in such a way that the punishment corresponds to the [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) that was committed (Middah kneged Middah, “Measure for measure”). [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) classic example of this is the punishment of the Egyptians who enslaved the Bnai Israel. The Egyptians persecuted the Israelites through water, by drowning [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) babies in the Nile river[[11]](#footnote-11), and their ultimate punishment was that they themselves were drowned in the [Red Sea](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html).[[12]](#footnote-12)

As we have pointed out, the catastrophic [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) of the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab were all precipitated by the original [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of Moshe’s [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html). Here, too, it can be shown that the specific [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) that transpired on these days were all clearly wrought with the theme of “Middah Keneged Middah”, measure for measure.

Let us [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) consider what the Tisha B’Ab [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of our ancestors was. The [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) sent spies to scout out the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) prior to entering in. The spies brought a bad report, and the people believed the bad report. Instead of trusting in [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) and His [appointed](file:///D:\Word\Av\settimes.html) leaders, the people rallied rebelliously behind the sinful spies.

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)***) 14:1*** *“The people wept all through that night”.*

This [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html), the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) tells us, took place on Tisha B’Ab. “That night that the people wept was Tisha B’Ab eve. [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) said to them, `You wept on this day for no good reason; I will establish this day as a day of [weeping](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) for all [generations](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html)’“[[13]](#footnote-13). The tragedies that befell the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) throughout the [generations](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) were apparently further punishments for the original sinful act committed by the [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) of the [Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html).

The Torah tells us that the punishment meted out immediately to those who allied themselves with the spies was that they would have to wander about in the desert for [forty](file:///D:\Word\Av\forty.html) years:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)***) 14:34*** *“*[*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *year for each day” of the spies’ excursion.*

The Torah makes it clear that the punishment of [forty](file:///D:\Word\Av\forty.html) years in the desert was “measure for measure”, [forty](file:///D:\Word\Av\forty.html) for [forty](file:///D:\Word\Av\forty.html). Can we say the same of the latter-day punishments, the [four](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) tragedies listed in the [Mishna](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Ta’anit? A closer examination reveals that in fact we may.

The [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of the Bnai Yisrael was that they rejected the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html). They were willing to pass up possession of the Promised Land, not even trying to conquer it, although [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) had already told them of its unique virtues.

The fall of the Temples that took place centuries later was more than just a loss of the opportunity to perform the sacrificial rite ordained by the Torah. It was the [event](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) that, symbolically and actually, spelled the end of organized [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) settlement in Israel. The destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) and the concept of [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) are always considered to be [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) sides of the same coin by our Sages[[14]](#footnote-14). The Torah itself seems to make this [connection](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html) in:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:31-2*** *“I will destroy your* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)*... and will scatter you among the* [*nations*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html)*.”*

It is clear that the punishment of the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), which is tantamount to [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) of the population, has a very close correlation with the original [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of Tisha B’Ab. Because the Bnei Israel expressed on Tisha B’Ab an unwillingness to accept the gift of the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html), they eventually lost the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) on that same date.

Betar was the central stronghold of the Bar Kochba rebellion against Rome[[15]](#footnote-15). Some sixty years after the destruction of the second [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html), led by the charismatic and courageous Bar Kochba, tried to throw off the Roman yoke from their necks. They even succeeded to some degree in establishing an autonomous [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) state in Israel for several years (132-135 CE). When the Bar Kochba uprising was finally put down by the Romans with the fall of Betar, it effectively represented the end of any [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) hope to sovereignty in the [land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) for the foreseeable [future](file:///D:\Word\Av\future.html). This too, then, is clearly an appropriate punishment for the original [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of the spies and their rejection of the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

The last of the [five](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) of Tisha B’Ab can be interpreted along the same lines. The final razing of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) was designed to quash any hopes among the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) for a restoration of their sovereignty, or even of their ability to [dwell](file:///D:\Word\Av\dwelling.html), in the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

# I. Why do we fast?

This section was adapted from:

**“Hitna’ari Me-afar Kumi” –**

**The** [**Secret**](file:///D:\Word\Av\sod.html) **of** [**Jewish**](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) **Regeneration**

by Rav Yair Kahn

Apart from the [mitzva](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) to [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) every day, there is a special [commandment](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) to [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) in times of national calamity. According to the Rambam in the beginning of Hilkhot Ta’aniyot, the verse:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)***) 10:9*** *“And if war should come upon your land, the enemy who troubles you, you shall blow on the trumpets“*

Is not a [commandment](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) simply to blow the trumpets, but rather includes [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and petition. Even the Ramban, who rules (in opposition to the Rambam) that daily [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) is only a Rabbinic [commandment](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html), admits at least partially that there is a Torah [commandment](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) to [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) in times of calamity. He declares, “And if perhaps they interpret [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) as a biblically-derived principle... then this is a [mitzva](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) for times of calamity...”[[16]](#footnote-16).

The foundation for the obligation to [cry](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) out to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) in times of calamity is the obligation of teshuva. And so the Rambam continues, “And this is part of teshuva...” There is a special obligation of teshuva in times of calamity, as it is written:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:30*** *“When you are in distress and all these things befall you... you shall return to* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *your God”*

The Rambam explains, “At a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when calamity strikes and they [cry](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) out and they blow on the trumpets, all will [know](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) that calamity has come upon them because of their evil deeds... and this is what will cause the calamity to be lifted from upon them. But if they do not [cry](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) out and do not blow [trumpets] but rather say, ‘This has happened to us since this is the way of the [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html), and this calamity is coincidental,’ this is the way of gross insensitivity, and will cause them to hold fast to their evil deeds, and other calamities will be added. This is what the Torah means when it says, ‘And if you [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) crookedly (in [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html): “keri,” from the root of the word meaning “coincidence”) with Me then I will likewise [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) crookedly with you’ - in other words, I shall bring calamity upon you in order that you return. If you maintain that your calamities are coincidental then I will increase those ‘coincidental’ calamities.”

The biblical obligation of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and teshuva, repentance, at a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of calamity is extended by Chazal to obligate fasting: “And the Hakhamim instructed that there should be fasting for every calamity, which comes upon the [community](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html), until Divine mercy is achieved”[[17]](#footnote-17). And what stands at the center of these obligations is the Divine Providence, which watches over Knesset Yisrael and entreats them, calling: “Shuvu banim shovavim, Return, O backsliding children!” Obviously, the very obligation to [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and fast at a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of calamity is based on the assumption that by means of sincere and genuine teshuva the calamity will be removed.

As opposed to “calamity” (tzara) an “evil decree” (gezera) cannot be removed. It expresses not Divine Providence but rather the distancing of the Divine Presence and [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) “hiding His [face](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html),” as it were. “Hakham Elazar said: Since the day on which the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was destroyed, there is a wall of iron that stands between Israel and their Father in [Heaven](file:///D:\Word\Av\heaven.html)“[[18]](#footnote-18). The reaction to an evil decree is not [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) but rather [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) and surrender to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s inscrutable will. “And Hakham Elazar said: Since the day on which the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was destroyed, the gates of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) are locked”[[19]](#footnote-19).

The seventeenth of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), despite the [five](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html) tragic [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), which took place on this day, is defined as a day of calamity. It is true that on this date the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) set of tablets were shattered, but following [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) on the part of Moshe Rabbeinu and teshuva on the part of the [nation](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html), we [merited](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html) to receive a second set of tablets. Likewise, on this date the walls of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) were indeed breached, the enemies stood ready to enter, and, therefore, it was a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of calamity for the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) [nation](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html). But it was only on Tisha B’Ab that a tragic decree was issued: “On Tisha B’Ab it was decreed upon our forefathers that they would not enter the land,” and despite Moshe’s entreaties, the attempts to mitigate the sharpness of the decree reached its tragic conclusion at Chorma[[20]](#footnote-20).

On the other fasts there is a special obligation of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and entreaties. The selichot and Torah portions read on these fasts, focus on Moshe Rabbeinu’s [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) following the [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of the golden calf, the declaration of the [Thirteen](file:///D:\Word\Av\thirteen.html) Attributes of Mercy. On the other [hand](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html), on Tisha B’Ab, the day established for [weeping](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) for all [generations](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html), we sit on the floor, read Eikha, Lamentations, and recite lamentations, and the Torah reading and haftara on this day [speak](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of the destruction. This distinction between Tisha B’Ab and the other fasts was already formulated by Rabbenu David[[21]](#footnote-21): “On Tisha B’Ab there is no ‘Ne’ila’ [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html), nor are [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[four](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) blessings recited, because [this day] is set aside not for [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) but rather for [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html).”[[22]](#footnote-22) Likewise, on Tisha B’Ab the “titkabel” clause is not included in the recitation of Kaddish[[23]](#footnote-23), and the sheliach tzibbur, the [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) leader, does not recite “Aneinu” in his repetition of the [Amida](file:///D:\Word\Av\amida.html) of Shacharit[[24]](#footnote-24). Rav Soloveitchik, zt”l, explained that only on the other fasts does [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) fulfill the special obligation of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) at a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of calamity, as explained above. But on Tisha B’Ab, “Even though I [cry](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) out and call for help, He has blocked my [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html)”[[25]](#footnote-25). Thus, even though Tisha B’Ab has the status of a fast day, it is still entirely different in its nature and purpose from any other public fast.

In terms of the other prohibitions of the day, Tisha B’Ab is again different from the other fasts. On [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [hand](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html), there are prohibitions, which are similar to those of Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html)[[26]](#footnote-26). On the other [hand](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html), these prohibitions reflect the [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) of Tisha B’Ab, rather than the positive obligations of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and teshuva. The [Gemara](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html)[[27]](#footnote-27) states, “The Hakhamim [taught](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html), all the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) pertaining to [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) apply on Tisha B’Ab as well; a person is forbidden to [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) and drink[[28]](#footnote-28), to anoint his [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html), to wear leather shoes and to engage in sexual [intercourse](file:///D:\Word\Av\marriageact.html)...”[[29]](#footnote-29)

In light of the above, let us return to the sugya in [Rosh Hashana](file:///D:\Word\Av\teruah.html): “Tisha B’Ab is different since on this day many sorrows befell us.” According to the fundamental distinction which we have drawn between a calamity and a decree, we can explain that what we are referring to here is not a quantitative addition of calamities on Tisha B’Ab over and above those of any other fast. We are dealing not with a calamity but rather with a decree. Therefore, we do not fast within the framework of the obligations of [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) and teshuva in order that the calamity will pass, but rather as part of our expression of sorrow and [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) over the bitter decree.

# II. Who should fast?

On *other* fast days, aside from Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html) and Tisha B’Ab, some poskim hold that pregnant and nursing women are not required to fast. Other poskim, however, hold that the minhag is that they should fast, unless they find it difficult. A person who is ill or suffering is not required to fast, even if there is no fear of danger to health.

On Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html) and Tisha B’Ab, however, pregnant and nursing women are ***required*** to fast the entire day even if they are suffering, with this difference: On Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html) a person is ***required*** to fast even if he is ill, unless there is danger to life. On Tisha B’Ab, if a person is suffering greatly or is old or weak and may become ill, even if there is no danger to life, he / she should not fast. A person with only a headache or similar minor discomforts, however, is required to fast.

If a nursing woman’s fasting will harm the infant (e.g., the infant is ill and a physician says that the fast will adversely affects the infant, the milk will be adequate for the child and the child refuses to [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) or nurse from others), she may [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) or drink as required. Where there is any question, a Hakham should be consulted.

If a person is not required to fast because it is dangerous, he is ***prohibited*** from fasting.

Even those persons who are not required to fast on Tisha B’Ab should not indulge or [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) more than is necessary to preserve their health.

Boys under Bar [Mitzva](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html), even those [twelve](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) years of age and girls under Bat [Mitzva](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html), even those under [eleven](file:///D:\Word\Av\eleven.html) years old, are not required to fast the entire day as they are required on Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html). According to Hakham D. Eider, noted halachic scholar, there are various opinions among Poskim as to whether children should fast part of the day.

# III. The Day Preceding Tisha B’Ab

When a [circumcision](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html), or a [Pidyon Haben](file:///D:\Word\Av\pidyon.html) ([redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) of a firstborn son), is celebrated on the day preceding Tisha B’Ab, and if meat is being served, the feast should be held in the forenoon.

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should not [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) for pleasure on the day before the 9th of Ab; and it is customary to [study](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) in the afternoon only the subjects permitted on Tisha B’Ab. Many poskim hold that although on Tisha B’Ab itself [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) is limited in what he may learn, on Erev Tisha B’Ab, however, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) may learn all portions and topics of Torah. This is how many poskim conducted themselves, even when Erev Tisha B’Ab occurred on a weekday and certainly when it was on [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html).

Concerning fasting on erev Tisha B’Ab, if a person fasts every Monday and Thursday, and erev Tisha B’Ab occurs on a Monday, or if [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) observes a yartzeit on erev Tisha B’Ab (many fast on a yartzeit) or if he would want to fast because of a disturbing [dream](file:///D:\Word\Av\dreams.html), a Rav should be consulted to resolve the need for fasting [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) consecutive days. [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who observes yartzeit on the day before Tisha B’Ab should resolve on the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) occasion not to fast any longer than until noon; then he should say the Mincha gedolah (the big Mincha), that is at 12:30 p.m., partake of a meal, and afterwards, at the approach of evening, [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) the concluding meal.

There are many [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) regarding the last meal before the fast. The proper minhag is to [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) the regular meal before the Mincha service. Afterward, we [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) Mincha, omitting the Tachanun (petition for [Grace](file:///D:\Word\Av\grace.html)), because Tisha B’Ab is called a [holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html), as it is written:

***Eicha (Lamentations) 1:15*** *“He has called a* [*holiday*](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) *for me.”*

**As Tisha B’**[**Av**](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) **Approaches**

At the approach of evening, we should sit on the ground, or a low stool, but it is not necessary to remove the shoes. [Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) should not sit down to [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) together, in order that they should not be obliged to recite the [Grace](file:///D:\Word\Av\grace.html) in company. Only bread and a cold hard-boiled egg should be [eaten](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) at this meal, and a morsel of bread should be dipped in ashes and [eaten](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html). [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should finish this meal while it is yet day.

All that is forbidden to be done on Tisha B’Ab is also forbidden in the twilight. [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should, therefore, remove the shoes before twilight.

During the afternoon prior to Tisha B’Ab, it is customary to [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) a full meal in preparation for the fast.

At the end of the afternoon, we [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) the “Seudah Hamaf-seket”, a meal consisting only of bread, water, and a hard-boiled egg.

The egg has [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) symbols: The round shape reminds us of a [sign](file:///D:\Word\Av\signs.html) of the [cycle](file:///D:\Word\Av\cycles.html) of life. Also, the egg is the only [food](file:///D:\Word\Av\food.html) which gets harder the more it is cooked, a symbol of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people’s ability to withstand persecution.

[Food](file:///D:\Word\Av\food.html) [eaten](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) at the “Seudah Hamaf-seket” is dipped in ashes, symbolic of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html). The meal should preferably be [eaten](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) alone, while seated on the ground in mourner’s fashion.

For Sefardim, the final meal before the fast (if it is [eaten](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) after the middle of the day) may not consist of more than [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) cooked [food](file:///D:\Word\Av\food.html). However, if it is usual to cook [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) [foods](file:///D:\Word\Av\food.html) together, such as rice and lentils (Kitchri), they are considered as [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) and are permitted.

# IV. The prohibitions

The basic prohibitions of the day are:

1. [Eating](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html),

2. Drinking,

3. Washing,

4. Cohabitation,

5. Wearing leather shoes,

6. Learning Torah (with exceptions), and

7. Anointing with oil - once the practice of Kings.

We will explore these in more depth in the following sections.

# V. Washing on Tisha B’Ab

Bathing for pleasure is forbidden, whether in hot or cold water; it is even forbidden to put [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s finger in water. In any case, there is no question that it is permitted for health and ritual purposes, when not for pleasure’s sake. Hence, we may wash our [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html) in the morning, but we must be careful not to wash more than the [fingers](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html), for this is what constitutes the ritual morning ablution, as an evil spirit rests on the [fingers](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) in the morning. After having dried the [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html) slightly, and while they are still moist, we may pass them over our [eyes](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html). [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) whose [eyes](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) are filmy after awakening from [sleep](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html), and who is accustomed to wash them every morning, is permitted to wash them as usual, and he need have no scruples about it. Likewise, if [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html) are soiled, he may wash the soiled spots. After responding to the call of nature, we may slightly wash our [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html), as we are accustomed to do. We should also wash our [fingers](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) for the Mincha services.

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who is accustomed to rinse his [mouth](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) or [teeth](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) daily may do so even with water on the other fast days, if the bad taste in his [mouth](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) causes him distress. On Tisha B’Ab, however, this is permissible only in instances of great distress. However, as care must be taken not to swallow the water, he should bend over when rinsing. Prohibited on Yom [HaKippurim](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html), rinsing [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s [mouth](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) with mouthwash or brushing [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s [teeth](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) without water, on Tisha B’Ab is questionable.

Women are allowed to rinse the edibles to be used for cooking, inasmuch as the purpose is not to wash the [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html). [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who is on his way to perform a precept, and he’s unable to proceed unless he crosses a stream, may cross it on his way there and on returning, and he need have no scruples about it. However, if he’s going for his own gain, he may cross on his way there, but not on returning. [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html), who returns from the road, and his [feet](file:///D:\Word\Av\heel.html) are sore, may bathe them in water.

Although only bathing for pleasure is forbidden, nonetheless, a woman whose [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) for taking the ritual immersion occurs on the night of the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab, should not perform the immersion as cohabitation is taboo on Tisha B’Ab. A woman, however, may wash the parts of the [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) that must be washed before beginning her [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) [clean](file:///D:\Word\Av\purity.html) Days.

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) may soak a cloth in water on Erev Tisha B’Ab and after it has dried to a point where it is not sufficiently damp to wet something else substantially, he may wipe his [face](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html), [hands](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html) and [feet](file:///D:\Word\Av\heel.html). This is permissible even if the intention is for pleasure. Since it is considered dry, according to [halacha](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html), it is not considered washing.

A bride within [thirty](file:///D:\Word\Av\thirty.html) days after her [wedding](file:///D:\Word\Av\wedding.html) may wash her [face](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html).

# VI. Wearing leather shoes

Wearing shoes is forbidden if they are made of leather; but wearing shoes made of cloth, or the like, if they are not trimmed with leather, is permissible. Those who have to [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) among non-[Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) may wear shoes, so, as not to expose themselves to ridicule; but [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should place some earth in the shoes. However, a righteous person should rightly cling to the rule. Men who stay in stores are surely forbidden to wear shoes, [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who has to [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) a long distance, since [walking](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) barefoot would cause him great distress, is permitted to wear shoes, but he must remove them in approaching a [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html). But [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who rides in a vehicle is forbidden to wear shoes.

Wearing leather shoes for medical reasons is permissible. Therefore, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) may wear leather shoes if his [foot](file:///D:\Word\Av\heel.html) was injured and sneakers or other permissible shoes would not afford adequate support. Where there is any doubt, consult a Hakham.

# VII. Miscellaneous customs[[30]](#footnote-30)

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) is permitted to learn Torah selections relevant to tragic [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and destruction. The general principle is to devote [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s thoughts to [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) tragic [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), rather than diverting oneself with other matters.

We are forbidden to greet a neighbor on the 9th Day of Ab, even to say “Good morning,” or the like. If greeted by an ignorant person or by a non-[Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html), we should return the greeting feebly; otherwise we might incur their anger. We are likewise forbidden to send a gift to a neighbor, because this is a form of greeting. This is the practice of mourners.

Anointing, too, is forbidden for pleasure; and if [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) has scabs on the [head](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html), or if it is necessary for some other remedy, it is permissible.

Swallowing capsules, bitter medicine tablets or bitter liquid medicine is permissible.

We should not [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) in the marketplace or in a busy shopping area, for there we might be prompted to indulge in [laughter](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) and merriment. Some authorities forbid the smoking of tobacco the whole day, while others permit it in the afternoon in the privacy of [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s own home.

With regard to work, our custom is to forbid even unskilled labor the night of Tisha B’Ab and up to noontime, if it takes [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) to do it. But work that does not take long to do, like the lighting of candles, or tying something up, is permitted. In the afternoon, all work is permitted. It is also the custom to forbid the transaction of business in the forenoon, but to permit it in the afternoon. However, a G-d-fearing man should not do any work nor transact any business the whole day, so that his mind is not diverted from [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html). A non-[Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) may do all manner of working, and if this work is of a nature that if done at once might cause a loss, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) is permitted to do it himself. A non-[Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) should do the milking of cows, but when that is impossible, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) may milk them himself.

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who engages in business or work where it is prohibited will not see a blessing from this forbidden work. [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who [eats](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) or drinks on Tisha B’Ab will not be among those privileged to participate in rejoicing over [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html). Experiencing its rejoicing will reward whoever mourns properly over [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

We do not engage in business or other distracting labors, unless it will result in a substantial loss.[[31]](#footnote-31)

It is customary not to sit on a bench or a chair, either at night or in the day till noon, [sitting](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) only on the floor. In the afternoon this is permissible, All the other things that are forbidden in Tisha B’Ab may not be done until the [stars](file:///D:\Word\Av\mazaroth.html) come out.

In the morning, the [tefillin](file:///D:\Word\Av\tefillin.html) are not put on, because they are called an “ornament.” Neither is the big [tallit](file:///D:\Word\Av\tzitzith.html) put on, because it is written[[32]](#footnote-32): “Bitza imrato,” and the Targum translates it: “He rent His royal garment”; but the small [tallit](file:///D:\Word\Av\tzitzith.html) should be put on, without saying the benediction thereon.

It is the custom not to start to prepare the meal before noon on Tisha B’Ab, but it is permissible if it is to be a religious feast.

If there is an infant to be [circumcised](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html), the [circumcision](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html) should be performed when the recital of “Kinnot” is concluded. The father and the mother of the infant, the sandek and the mohel are permitted to don their [Sabbath](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html) attire in honor of the [circumcision](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html). After the [circumcision](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html), they should remove these garments. Candles may be lit in honor of the [circumcision](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html), and the goblet of wine should be given to a minor to drink.

Cohabitation is forbidden, and [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should be careful not even to touch his wife. It is proper not to have sexual [intercourse](file:///D:\Word\Av\marriageact.html) on the night of the 10th of Ab day, unless it is on the night of the ritual immersion, or if [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) is about to go on a [journey](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html), or has returned from a [journey](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html).

A man should deprive himself of some comfort when he goes to [sleep](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) on the night of the 9th of Ab. If he is accustomed, for instance, to [sleep](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) on [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) pillows, he should [sleep](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) on only [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html). Some people [sleep](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) on the floor during the night of Tisha B’Ab, and place a stone underneath the [head](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html), to conform to what is written about [Jacob](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 28:11*** *“and he took from the stones of the place,”*

Because, the Hakhamim say, he foresaw the destruction of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) and the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), and he said (verse 7): “How fearful,” etc. All these depend on the character of the individual.

From the onset of the month of Ab joyfulness should be lessened, and [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) who has a court-case with a non-[Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) should postpone it till after the tenth of Ab.

Negotiations for and acquisitions of items for joyous purposes, such as marriages, are postponed till after the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab. However, they are permitted if the items would not be available later, or if they would then be more costly.

While some Sepharadim do not perform weddings from Rosh Hodesh to the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab, the accepted practice is to be strict and forbid it from [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\tamuz17.html) 17.

The week of Tisha B’Ab is calculated from the [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html) preceding it to Tisha B’Ab. During this week, cutting of [hair](file:///D:\Word\Av\hair.html) is prohibited, and this is the Minhagh of most Sepharadim. Ashkenazim prohibit it for the [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) days. Some Sepharadim have adopted this custom also.

We do not take haircuts or wash our clothes or [bodies](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) until midday of the 10th of Ab.

Sepharadim do not partake of meat and wine from the night after [Rosh Chodesh](file:///D:\Word\Av\chodesh.html) Ab. But on [Rosh Chodesh](file:///D:\Word\Av\chodesh.html) itself, meat and wine are consumed in honor of the special day[[33]](#footnote-33). Ashkenazim abstain from [Rosh Chodesh](file:///D:\Word\Av\chodesh.html). It is common among Sepharadim to break the fast of Tisha B’Ab with a chicken meal. The Ashkenazi custom, however is to postpone this till the day of the tenth of Ab. [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should not sit on the floor itself, while [eating](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) this meal, as this is not good according to kabbalah. Instead, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) should sit on a mat or something similar.

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) may not cut [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)’s nails during this week, though on ‘Ereb (the eve of) [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html) Chazon it is permitted. However, if the nails extend beyond the flesh of the [fingers](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) they may be cut, even on this week, as it is a great obligation to do so according to the kabbala.

Eicha, Lamentations, is read at night and again in the morning, in accordance with the Sepharadim. Some Ashkenazim, however, read it only at night.

# VIII. [Prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) On Tisha B’Ab

**1**. Lights in the [synagogue](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html) are dimmed, candles are lit, and the curtain is removed from the Ark. The chazzan leads the [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) in a low, mournful voice. This reminds us of the Shekinah which departed from the Holy [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html).

**2**. The Book of Eicha (Lamentations), Jeremiah’s poetic lament over the destruction of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) and the [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), is read both at night and during the day.

**3**. Following both the night and day service, special “Kinot” (elegies) are recited.

**4**. In the morning, the Torah portion of Devarim[[34]](#footnote-34) is read, containing the prophecy regarding Israel’s [future](file:///D:\Word\Av\future.html) iniquity and [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html). This is followed by the Haftorah from Yiremiyahu (Jeremiah) 8:13, 9:1-23, describing the desolation of Zion.

**Sefardim**

Evening Service:

Reading of the Book of Lamentations

Morning Service:

**Torah Reading:**

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:25-40

**Haftarah:**

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 8:13 – 9:23

Book of Iyov (Job)

Reader 1 – Devarim 4:25-29

Reader 2 – Devarim 4:30-34

Reader 3 – Devarim 4:35-40

Yirmeyahu 8:13 – 9:23

(In Sephardi Congregations this Haftarah is read in Ladino)

Book of Iyov (Job) is read

Afternoon Service:

Torah Reading:

Shemot ([Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html)) 32:11-14; 34:1-10

Haftarah:

Hoshea (Hosea 14:2-10 ([AV](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html): 14:1-9)

Mikha (Micah) 7:18-20

Reader 1 – Shemot 32:11-14

Reader 2 – Shemot 34:1-3

Reader 3 – Shemot 34:4-10

Hoshea 14:2-10

Mikha 7:18-20

**5**. In the afternoon, Shemot ([Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html)) 32:11-14 is read. This is followed by the Haftorah from Yeshiyahu (Isaiah) 55-56.

**6**. Since [Tallit](file:///D:\Word\Av\tzitzith.html) and [Tefillin](file:///D:\Word\Av\tefillin.html) represent glory and decoration, they are not worn at Shacharit. Rather, they are worn at Mincha, as certain [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) restrictions are lifted.

**7**. Birkat [Kohanim](file:///D:\Word\Av\priests.html) is said only at Mincha, not at Shacharit.

**8**. [Prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) for comforting Zion and “Aneinu” are inserted into the [Amidah](file:///D:\Word\Av\amida.html) [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) at mincha. The [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) of Nacheim (“Console...”) is recited in the mincha Shemoneh Esreh on Tisha B’Ab because mincha is the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) the [birth](file:///D:\Word\Av\thebirth.html) of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html), whose [name](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) is Menachem.

**9**. Before the fast is broken, it is customary to say Kiddush Lavanah because on Tisha B’Ab [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) will be “born”. [In the blessing we say, “And they will seek David their king.”]

**10.** We skip parts of the Uva L’tzion and kaddish. We skip those parts where we ask [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) to [forgive](file:///D:\Word\Av\forgive.html) us.

**11.** We don’t say Tachanun as we do on all other fast days.

Now that we have explored the [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) of Tisha B’Ab, we should have noticed something VERY VERY unusual. We should have noticed that there were no selichot, no neilah, and no other [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) for [forgiveness](file:///D:\Word\Av\forgive.html)! On this tragic day we do not repent because on this day our [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) will **not** be heard.

On Tisha B’Ab [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) will not hear our [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) for [forgiveness](file:///D:\Word\Av\forgive.html)!

We read about this unusual response in the reading of Eichah:

***Eichah (Lamentations)*** *3:8 Also when I* [*cry*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *and shout, he shutteth out my* [*prayer*](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html)*.*

***Eichah (Lamentations) 3:44*** *Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that [our]* [*prayer*](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) *should not pass through.*

Perhaps the most poignant of all is the [command](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) of [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) to Yeremyahu NOT to [pray](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) for the people:

***Yeremyahu (Jeremiah) 11:14*** *Therefore* [*pray*](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) *not thou for this people, neither lift up a* [*cry*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *or* [*prayer*](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) *for them: for I will not hear [them] in the* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) *that they* [*cry*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *unto me for their trouble.*

On this day there is no teshuva, no repentance. Even teshuva is forbidden in [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html)! If we arrive at Tisha B’Ab with our teshuva, we have arrived unprepared. We have contributed to the destruction of the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html), the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html). It is our duty to build ourselves into the lively stones as a fit place for the Shechina to rest.

We must do teshuva before Tisha B’Ab! We must repent while there is yet [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html)!

# IX. When Tisha B’Ab falls on [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html)

When Tisha B’Ab falls on [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html), the following special conditions apply:

**1**. The fast is pushed off until Saturday night and Sunday.

**2**. All other prohibitions of Tisha B’Ab (washing, learning Torah, leather shoes, etc.) are permitted on [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html) itself, except for marital relations.

**3**. Care should be taken to complete “Seudah Shlishit” before sundown.

**4**. “Seudah Hamaf-seket” may include meat and wine.

**5**. Arbit on Saturday night is delayed, so that everyone can say “Baruch Hamavdil bein kodesh li’chol,” then remove their leather shoes and come to Shul.

**6**. Havdallah on Saturday night is recited only over a candle, without wine or spices. On Sunday night, Havdallah is then said over wine.

According to the Rashba, [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html) the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab is not a day of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html), no prohibitions apply to [Shabbat](file:///D:\Word\Av\sabbath.html), and it is reasonable to conclude that Sunday the tenth is the proper day of the fast and no leniency’s should apply.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, Sunday is not in principle the proper day of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html); hence, a father of a [brit mila](file:///D:\Word\Av\circumcz.html)h does not complete the fast.

# X. [Synagogue](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html) Customs

This section is an extract from the Encyclopedia Judaica.



The [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) rites of Tisha B’Ab are reflected in the following changes in the [synagogue](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html) liturgy and usage:

1 The lights in the [synagogue](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html) are dimmed and only a few candles are lit, as a symbol of the darkness which has befallen Israel. In some rites (Sephardi, Yemenite), it is customary to extinguish all lights immediately after the conclusion of the evening service prior to the reading of the *Kinot* (“dirges”), and the oldest member of the congregation or the *hazzan* then announces: “This year is the... so and so... since the destruction of the Holy [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html).” Afterward he addresses the congregation with words of chastisement and repentance in the spirit of the saying: “Each [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) in which the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) is not rebuilt should regard itself as responsible for its destruction.” This is answered by wailing and [crying](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html). Then the lights are lit again.

2 The curtain of the Ark is removed in memory of the curtain in the Holy of Holies in the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) which, according to the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html), was stabbed and desecrated by Titus. In some Sephardi [synagogues](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html) where the Ark normally has no curtain, a black curtain is hung and the [Torah Scroll](file:///D:\Word\Av\letters.html)s themselves are draped in black mantles.

3 The congregants sit on low benches, footstools, or on the floor as mourners do during the *shivah* period.

4 The *Chazzan* recites the [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) in a monotonous and melancholy tune.

5 Some people change their customary seats in the [synagogue](file:///D:\Word\Av\synagog.html).

6 In some congregations the [Torah Scroll](file:///D:\Word\Av\letters.html) is placed on the floor and ashes put on it while the congregants recite the words: Eicha (Lamentations) 5:16 “the crown is fallen from our [head](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html)” or other appropriate verses[[35]](#footnote-35).

7 The [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) service is the regular weekday service, with the following changes: In the evening, the Scroll of Eicha (Lamentations) is followed by special dirges, *Kinot*. In the Sephardi rite the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, is substituted for the Song of Moses, Shemot ([Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html)) 15, which is normally recited after the morning [Psalms](file:///D:\Word\Av\psalms1.html). After the main part of the morning service *Kinot* are recited commemorating many of the tragic [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) in [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) history (in the Sephardi rite they are recited before the Reading of the Torah). In the Ashkenazi rite these include *Sha’ali Serufah be-Esh* by R. Meir of Rothenburg (occasioned by the burning of the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) in Paris in 1242), *Arzei ha-Levanon* (commemorating the death of the “[Ten](file:///D:\Word\Av\ten.html) Martyrs”), the Odes to Zion, beginning with the famous *Ziyyon ha-lo Tishali* of Judah Halevi and concluding with *Eli Ziyyon ve-Areha* sung to a special melody (see *Eli Ziyyon*). The Sephardi *Kinot* differ from the Ashkenazi and do not include those mentioned. There is, however, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) which is based upon the [Four](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) Questions of the [Passover](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html) [Seder](file:///D:\Word\Av\haggada.html), the opening stanza of which is: “I will ask some questions of the holy congregation; How is this night different from other nights? Why on [Passover](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html) eve do we [eat](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) [*matza*](file:///D:\Word\Av\chametz.html) and bitter herbs, while this night all is bitterness...?”

8 During the reader’s repetition of the [*Amidah*](file:///D:\Word\Av\amida.html) the *Anenu* [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) is inserted between the seventh and [eighth](file:///D:\Word\Av\eight.html) benedictions as on all fast days. In the silent [*Amidah*](file:///D:\Word\Av\amida.html) it is recited in the 16th benediction of the afternoon service and in the Sephardi and Yemenite rites at all services. The Italian rite recites it in the morning and afternoon services. In the afternoon service a special [prayer](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) *Nahem* is added to the benediction for the restoration of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

9 From the Middle Ages it became customary except among certain oriental [communities](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html) not to wear [*tallit*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tzitzith.html) and [*tefillin*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tefillin.html) during the morning service. (They are considered to be ornaments, and the [*tefillin*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tefillin.html) in particular are held to be Israel’s “crown of glory.”) They are worn instead during the afternoon service. (Thus the blessing “who crowns Israel with glory” is omitted from the morning benedictions, because it refers to the [*tefillin*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tefillin.html).)

10 The morning service as well as the afternoon service include readings from the Torah. In the morning the reading is Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:24–40, and the *haftarah* Yiremiyahu (Jeremiah) 8:13–9:23; in the afternoon service Shemot ([Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html)) 32:11–14 and 34:1–10, and, as *haftarah*, Yeshiyahu (Isaiah) 55:6; 56:8 as on all fast days. The Sephardi *haftarah* is Hosea 14:2–9. In some rituals the person called up to the Torah says: “Blessed be the righteous Judge”, the verse by which mourners are greeted.

11 Some people sprinkle ashes on their [head](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) as a symbol of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html). In [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) it is customary to visit the Western Wall on Tisha B’Ab, where Lamentations and the *Kinot* are recited by the different [communities](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html) according to their rites. There are many other local [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) customs. Visits to the cemeteries, especially to the graves of martyrs and pious men, were frequent, in order to implore the deceased to intercede for the speedy [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) of Israel. School children used to throw [seed](file:///D:\Word\Av\flower.html)-burrs of plants at each other in Poland and in Russia. The [shofar](file:///D:\Word\Av\shofar.html) was blown in Algiers in memory of the ancient fast day ceremonies in the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html). Women anointed themselves with fragrant oils and perfumes on the afternoon of Tisha B’Ab, for they believed that the [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) would be born (or appear) on this day and it would become a great [holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) (Egypt). In the evening after the fast, some people greet each other with the formula: “You shall soon enjoy the comfort of Zion.”

# XI. [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) and the Final [Redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html)

Chazal[[36]](#footnote-36) say that the [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) will be “born” on the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of [Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), and that in the days after [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) comes, the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of [Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) will be a [holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) of joy, as it was originally intended. This is reflected in the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) of the day, as we don’t say *Tachanun*. It is not like the other fast days:

[***Midrash***](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Lamentations I:51*** *The following story supports what R. Judan said in the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of R. Aibu: It happened that a man was ploughing, when* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *of his oxen lowed. An Arab passed by and asked, ‘What are you?’ He answered, ‘I am a* [*Jew*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html)*.’ He said to him, ‘Unharness your ox and untie your plough’ [as a mark of* [*mourning*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html)*]. ‘ Why? ‘ he asked. ‘ Because the* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) *of the* [*Jews*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) *is destroyed.’ He inquired, ‘From where do you* [*know*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *this?’ He answered, ‘I* [*know*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *it from the lowing of your ox.’ While he was conversing with him, the ox lowed again. The Arab said to him, ‘Harness your ox and tie up your plough, because the deliverer of the* [*Jews*](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) *is born.’ ‘What is his* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html)*?’ he asked; and he answered, ‘His* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *is “Comforter”.’ ‘What is his father’s* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html)*?’ He answered, ‘ Hezekiah.’ ‘ Where do they live? ‘ He answered, ‘In Birath ‘Arba in* [*Bethlehem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\bethlehem.html) *of Judah.’*

The Hakhamim of the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) [teach](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html) that on the afternoon of Tisha B’Ab, the very day of the destruction, [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) is “born”. This suggests that each year, on Tisha B’Ab, the [seeds](file:///D:\Word\Av\flower.html) of [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) are planted. This day, each year, has the energy to bring forth the [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) and the final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html)!

The meaning of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html)’s birthday [being on Tisha B’Ab] is not that he came into this [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html) on that date, because if so, he could not in actuality be described as the “Redeemer of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people” then; it means that [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html), as an adult, is revealed as the “Redeemer of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people,” (comparable to [birth](file:///D:\Word\Av\birth.html) in the literal sense when a newborn is revealed into this [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html)), and that he is prepared and worthy to [redeem](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people in actuality. From all the indications given by our Sages, we are in the “[generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) of the footsteps of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html),” and the Geulah, the [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html), can come at moment’s notice, so [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) has to be prepared to take us out of [galut](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html).

Every [Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) has within him a spark of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html), which empowers and vitalizes him, and with this spark every [Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) can transcend the limitations of nature and revert to a super-natural order. As we are at the end of this final [galut](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), when we have already completed the the work of refinement in [galut](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), with all the trials and tribulations, the “birthpangs of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html),” the terrible, horrific unimaginable things which have transpired in our [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) [“may they never happen again”] – it is very plain and simple that now is the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) are about to go into Eretz Yisrael in the final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) with [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) Tzidkeinu.

[Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) is waiting impatiently for the moment when he will [redeem](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people from [galut](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), and this can come immediately: considering the achievements of the Divine service during all this [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html), it is certain that [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) is [coming](file:///D:\Word\Av\coming.html) “today.” Having already definitely done teshuvah, we have the promise and the ruling that the Geulah must come immediately, it will not be delayed even as much as a wink of an eye, especially since it is also a situation of [merited](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html) and deserving, so that [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) will come “on the clouds of [heaven](file:///D:\Word\Av\heaven.html).” The practical lesson for us from all of this: We have to [know](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) that the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html)’s arrival is certainly here; we have but to “stand prepared” to greet him with longing and yearning for [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html). and this will certainly bring about his revelation. In an auspicious [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when his “mazal“ is predominant, this trickles down to every [Jew](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html), that he should add in “a single [mitzva](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html)” which will tip the scales for the individual and the entire [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html), and bring [salvation](file:///D:\Word\Av\salvation.html) and the true, complete [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) immediately. [[37]](#footnote-37)

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“Hakham Abin opened as follows: ‘Feed me bitterness’, on the eve of [Pesach](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html), ‘fill me with gall’, on Tisha B’Ab[[38]](#footnote-38). The bitter herbs of the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) night of [Pesach](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html) are related to the pain of Tisha B’Ab. The [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) [events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) are always the same day of the week.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

The above passage again [connects](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html) the idea of [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) to Tisha B’Ab. In the same way that [Pesach](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html) and its [seder](file:///D:\Word\Av\haggada.html) [speak](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of the final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html), so too, does this day [speak](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of our final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html). The [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) days are linked for our [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html).

A birthday is a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when the specific mazal, constellation, or [spiritual](file:///D:\Word\Av\physical.html) energy as manifest by the mazal, which was in force during a person’s [birth](file:///D:\Word\Av\birth.html) is once again ascendent, giving him power and strength. Thus, [the birth](file:///D:\Word\Av\thebirth.html)day of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) is a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when he, and the [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) with which he is associated, are granted [new](file:///D:\Word\Av\new.html) power. This power, in turn, hastens the advent of the day when the [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) will become actually manifest.[[40]](#footnote-40)

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The following is an excerpt from *Reflections & Introspections*, Elul – Rosh Hashanah – Yom Kippur – Sukkos, TORAH INSIGHTS OF HAGAON HAGADOL RavMoshe Shapiro.

“The Sages state (Yalkut Shimoni chapter 782), “In each month of the summer months, the Holy Blessed One wished to give to Israel a festival. In Nisan He gave to them Passover, in Iyar He gave to them Passover Minor,” which we call *Pesach Sheni,* “and in Sivan He gave to them Shavuot. In Tammuz, He had in mind to give to them a great festival, but they made the Golden Calf, and it cancelled Tammuz, Av, and Elul. Tishri came, and it recompensed them with Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html). The Holy Blessed One said of it, “Shall it recompense others and not take its own? Give it its day: “On the eighth day, it shall be Atzeret for you” (Bamidbar 29:35).”

“The implication is that the great festival of the Seventeenth of Tammuz was to be Rosh Hashanah, but due to what occurred, it became the fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz. The great festival of the Ninth of Av was to be Yom Kippur, but again, due to what occurred, it became the bitter and evil day of destruction. At the beginning of Elul was to be the Festival of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html), and it would conclude the festivals of summer. The festival of Tishri itself was to be what we currently call Shemini Atzeret; this festival belongs to Tishri inherently.”

“In fact, Shemini Atzeret, the Atzeres of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html) was to arrive just as Shavuot, the Atzeret of Passover. There, we count forty-nine days from the day after the first of Passover, and the fiftieth day is Shavuot. Here, we were to count forty-nine days from the day after the first of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html), meaning from the second day of Elul. This ends on Hoshana Rabbah, and the fiftieth day is Shemini Atzeret.”

“The sages ask this in actuality.[[41]](#footnote-41) Why do we not have the same custom regarding the Atzeret of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html) as we have regarding the Atzeret of Passover? Why do we not count fifty days from [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html) and then celebrate the Atzeret of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html)?”

“They answer that the Creator did not wish to overburden the Jewish People to come to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage during the rainy season. Fifty days from the current date of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html) would occur in the middle of the winter, and it is not conducive for travel.”

“Clearly, it is befitting for there to be a counting of forty-nine days and then to celebrate the Atzeret of [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html). Thus, if [Succoth](file:///F:\Word\SUCCOTH\succoth.html) were in Elul that is how it would be.”

# XII. The Almond and the Lively Stones



Almond Tree in bloom

The [Gemara](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html)[[42]](#footnote-42) asserts that a hen’s egg generally takes [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days to hatch, just as the almond blossom takes [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days to develop into a fruit. Tosefot ad. loc. quotes a [Midrash](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html)[[43]](#footnote-43) that explains a prophesy of Yirmiyahu based on this:

***Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 1:1-16*** *Moreover the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a* [*rod*](file:///D:\Word\Av\staff.html) *of an almond tree. Then said* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it. And the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *came unto me the second* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html)*, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the* [*face*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *thereof [is] toward the north. Then* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*; and they shall come, and they shall set every* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *his throne at the entering of the gates of* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their* [*wickedness*](file:///D:\Word\Av\wicked.html)*, who have forsaken me, and have burned* [*incense*](file:///D:\Word\Av\ketoret.html) *unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own* [*hands*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html)*.*

Yirmiyahu was shown an almond branch in a prophetic vision of retribution. The point of his vision, then, was to demonstrate that just as the almond blossom takes [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days to produce fruit, so too, the destruction of [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) will be accomplished during a [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) day period; from Shiv’ah Asar B’[Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), until Tisha B’Ab, the 9th of Ab.

The almond can be regarded as having [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) periods of ripening. It is edible together with its rind a few weeks after the tree blooms, while the fruit is still green. Its second ripening is [three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) months later, when the outer rind has shriveled and the inside cover has become a hard shell[[44]](#footnote-44).

In its exposition of Jeremiah’s vision, the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) has the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) ripening in mind: “Just as [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days elapse from the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) the almond sends forth its blossom until the fruit ripens, so [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days passed from the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) the [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) was breached until the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was destroyed”[[45]](#footnote-45), the [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days being the period between the Seventeenth of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and the [Ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab.

Beth-El was originally called Luz[[46]](#footnote-46) which is the less common word for almond or almond tree in [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html), but *loz* is the regular Arabic word for almond.

The Place of the [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html), the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html), The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)**,** is a place of [connection](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html), a place of intimacy. This place was called Bethel which means “The [House of God](file:///D:\Word\Av\housegod.html)”. This was THE PLACE of the [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html).This was the place where [Jacob](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) slept for the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) in [fourteen](file:///D:\Word\Av\fourteen.html) years:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 28:10-22***[*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) *left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the* [*sun*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hachama.html) *had set. Taking* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *of the stones there, he put it under his* [*head*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *and lay down to* [*sleep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*. He had a* [*dream*](file:///D:\Word\Av\dreams.html) *in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to* [*heaven*](file:///D:\Word\Av\heaven.html)*, and the* [*angels*](file:///D:\Word\Av\angels.html) *of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*, and he said: “I am* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*, the God of your father* [*Abraham*](file:///D:\Word\Av\avraham.html) *and the God of* [*Isaac*](file:///D:\Word\Av\isaac.html)*. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the* [*east*](file:///D:\Word\Av\east.html)*, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” When* [*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) *awoke from his* [*sleep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*, he thought, “Surely* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” He was afraid and said, “How* [*awesome*](file:///D:\Word\Av\awesome.html) *is this place! This is none other than the* [*house of God*](file:///D:\Word\Av\housegod.html)*; this is the gate of* [*heaven*](file:///D:\Word\Av\heaven.html)*.” Early the next morning* [*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) *took the stone he had placed under his* [*head*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, though the* [*city*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *used to be called Luz. Then* [*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) *made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this* [*journey*](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html) *I am taking and will give me* [*food*](file:///D:\Word\Av\food.html) *to* [*eat*](file:///D:\Word\Av\eating.html) *and clothes to wear So that I return safely to my father’s house, then* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *will be my God And this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be* [*God’s house*](file:///D:\Word\Av\housegod.html)*, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”*

This “certain place” is defined by Strong’s as:

*4725 maqowm, maw-kome’; or maqom, maw-kome’; also (fem.) meqowmah, mek-o-mah’; or meqomah, mek-o-mah’; from 6965; prop. a* [*standing*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*, i.e. a spot; but used widely of a locality (gen. or spec.); also (*[*fig*](file:///D:\Word\Av\bethphag.html)*.) of a condition (of* [*body*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *or mind):-country, X home, X open,* ***place****, room, space, X whither [-soever].*

The [Midrash](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) calls this “certain place”, “The Place”:

[***Midrash***](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) LXVIII:11*** *AND HE TOOK OF2 THE STONES OF THE PLACE (XXVIII, 11). R. Judah said: He took* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) *stones, saying: ‘The Holy* [*One*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)*, blessed be He, has decreed that* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html)[*tribes*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tribes.html) *should spring forth. Now neither* [*Abraham*](file:///D:\Word\Av\avraham.html) *nor* [*Isaac*](file:///D:\Word\Av\isaac.html) *has produced them. If these* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) *stones cleave to* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *another, then I* [*know*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *that I will produce the* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html)[*tribes*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tribes.html)*.’ When therefore the* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) *stones united,[[47]](#footnote-47)[23] he* [*knew*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *that he was to produce the* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html)[*tribes*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tribes.html)*. R. Ezra said: He took* [*three*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *stones, saying: ‘ The Holy* [*One*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)*, blessed be He, united His* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *with* [*Abraham*](file:///D:\Word\Av\avraham.html)*; with* [*Isaac*](file:///D:\Word\Av\isaac.html) *too He united His* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html)*. If these* [*three*](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) *stones become joined, then I am assured that God’s* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *will be united with me too.’ And when they did thus join, he* [*knew*](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) *that God would unite His* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *with him.’ The Hakhamim said: [He took] the least* [*number*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html) *that ‘stones’ can connote, viz.* [*two*](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html)*, saying: ‘From* [*Abraham*](file:///D:\Word\Av\avraham.html) *there came forth Ishmael and the children of Keturah; from* [*Isaac*](file:///D:\Word\Av\isaac.html) *there came forth* [*Esau*](file:///D:\Word\Av\edom.html)*. As for me, if these* [*two*](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) *stones join, I will be assured that nought worthless will come forth from me.’ R. Levi and R. Eleazar in the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of R. Jose b. Zimra said: He arranged them in the shape of a roof-gutter and put them under his* [*head*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html)*, because he was afraid of the wild beasts.*

The [world](file:///D:\Word\Av\worlds.html) was fashioned from the foundation stone. At Beth-el, the place, the stones are feminine. [Twelve](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) stones became [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) stone at the place of oneness. The [twelve](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) foundation stones became [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html).

Eliyahu also built an altar of [twelve](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) stones:

***1 Melakim (1 Kings) 18:30-32*** *And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *[that was] broken down. And Elijah took* [*twelve*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twelve.html) *stones, according to the* [*number*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html) *of the* [*tribes*](file:///D:\Word\Av\tribes.html) *of the sons of* [*Jacob*](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html)*, unto whom the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *came, saying, Israel shall be thy* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html)*: And with the stones he built an altar in the* [*name*](file:///D:\Word\Av\name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)*: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain* [*two*](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) *measures of* [*seed*](file:///D:\Word\Av\flower.html)*.*

Here we see that the stones clearly represent the Bnai Yisrael. The stones are people!

The [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) word for stone is “even,” (short e). The *even* symbolizes the bond between the [generations](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) and the eternity of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) People, as in the verse, “From there the shepherd of Even Israel.” “Even” is also an acronym for “Ab Ubanim,” which means “father and sons.” In addition, the even symbolizes the longing of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) People for the [Land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html), as in the verse, “Her servants [desire](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) her stones,” as well as for the building of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) (from stones) on the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) Mount in [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) and for the return of [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s Holy Presence in our midst.[[48]](#footnote-48)

How fitting then is the association between Luz, the almond, with its [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) day period of ripening and destruction of the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html), The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)!

Just as the almond blossom, the Luz, takes [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) days to produce fruit, so too, the destruction of The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) will be accomplished during a [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) day period; from Shiv’ah ‘Asar B’[Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html), until Tisha B’Ab, the 9th of Ab.

The [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) day period leading up to the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) demonstrates [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s love for His people. Sometimes [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) finds it necessary, in His merciful ways, to punish the Bnei Israel. Even this, however, is also for their ultimate good. Hardships melt away a person’s [sins](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html).[[49]](#footnote-49)

The Cherubin in The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), child like creatures with wings. They were [male](file:///D:\Word\Av\male+female.html) and [female](file:///D:\Word\Av\male+female.html) and they embraced each other when the Bnei Israel were close to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) in our [walk](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html). The faced each other perfectly.

When we, as a [nation](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html), were far from [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html), the Cherubin were not embracing and had their backs to each other. They mirrored our relationship to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html).

***Yoma 54a*** *Kattina said: Whenever Israel came up to the* [*Festival*](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html)*, the curtain would be removed for them and the* [*Cherubim*](file:///D:\Word\Av\angels.html) *were shown to them, whose* [*bodies*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *were intertwisted with* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *another, and they would be thus addressed: Look! You are beloved before God as the love between man and woman.*

When the Babylonians destroyed The [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), they dragged the embracing [cherubim](file:///D:\Word\Av\angels.html) through the streets to show what the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) worshipped. This embarrassed the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) who were violating this love.

Why were they embracing at the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of our greatest apostasy?

This was the love of [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) when He had to punish us in order that we should return to Him. Surely this was the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when He was showing us His greatest love!

Never forget that the destruction of the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) represents a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) was showing His love to His people. We are the lively stones! It is the Bnei Israel that [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) [wants](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) to [dwell](file:///D:\Word\Av\dwelling.html) with!

***1 Tsefet (Peter) 2:1-10*** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes,* [*desire*](file:///D:\Word\Av\needs.html) *the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious. To whom* [*coming*](file:///D:\Word\Av\coming.html)*, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a* [*spiritual*](file:///D:\Word\Av\physical.html) *house, an holy priesthood, to offer up* [*spiritual*](file:///D:\Word\Av\physical.html) *sacrifices, acceptable to God by* [*Yeshua*](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html) *HaMashiach. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the* [*head*](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) *of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were* [*appointed*](file:///D:\Word\Av\settimes.html)*. But ye [are] a chosen* [*generation*](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html)*, a royal priesthood, an holy* [*nation*](file:///D:\Word\Av\nations.html)*, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in* [*time*](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) *past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

The [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) Yerushalami writes that every [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) in which the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), which was destroyed on Tisha B’Ab, is not rebuilt, should consider itself as if the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) was destroyed in its days. We [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) the loss of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), those lively stones which are fit as a [dwelling](file:///D:\Word\Av\dwelling.html) place for [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html), on the 9th of Ab. However, do we yearn for the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) to the extent that we have a drive to improve so that we should [merit](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html) it being rebuilt? Do we feel the [spiritual](file:///D:\Word\Av\physical.html) void that exists and therefore strive to perfect our character, to deal with our fellow man properly in business and social relationships, to adhere to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s [mitzvot](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) and [study](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) His Torah with faith and devotion? If we do not attempt to better ourselves, we show, as the [generations](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) of the destruction did, a lack of love for [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html)’s [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html), His [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html), His lively stones. We would be just as responsible for the destruction of the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) as the [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) in which it was destroyed.

Now is the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) to build a fitting place for [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html). Now is the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) to build the lively stones. If not now, when?

# XIII. Tisha B’Ab and [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html)

(This section was written by my [teacher](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html), His Eminence Hakham Dr. [Yosef](file:///D:\Word\Av\joseph.html) ben Haggi.)

It is the view of some, that there is little or no mention in the Nazarean Codicil about the [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) important fast days of the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and the 9th of Ab. The obvious paucity of clear references to these [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) fasts is predicated upon [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) facts. [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html), that whilst the second [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) stood, these [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) fasts whilst important did not have the importance, meaningful and far-reaching [consequences](file:///D:\Word\Av\conseq.html) that such fasts had immediately after the destruction of the Second [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) or even more so today as we hear the footsteps of the [Messiah](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html). Secondly, and equally important, there is a discussion about fasting between [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](file:///D:\Word\Av\joseph.html) and the disciples of Yochanan the Immerser in Matityahu 9:14-17 where we read in the [New](file:///D:\Word\Av\new.html) Revised Standard Version:

*v.14. Then the disciples of Yochanan came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, {Other ancient authorities lack [often]} but your disciples do not fast?”*

*v.15. And* [*Yeshua*](file:///D:\Word\Av\yeshua.html) *said to them, “The* [*wedding*](file:///D:\Word\Av\wedding.html) *guests cannot* [*mourn*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) *as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

*v.16. No* [*one*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) *sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made.*

*v.17. Neither is* [*new*](file:///D:\Word\Av\new.html) *wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but* [*new*](file:///D:\Word\Av\new.html) *wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”*

In other words, whilst [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) was here on earth, the dictum of the Tanach[[50]](#footnote-50), in Zechariah, became operative, as a foretaste of things yet to come:

***Zechariah 8:18-19*** *“The word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *of Hosts came to me, saying: Thus says Ha-Shem of Hosts: The fast of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *month, and the fast of the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html)*, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be seasons of joy and gladness, and cheerful* [*festivals*](file:///D:\Word\Av\festivals.html) *for the house of Judah: therefore love truth and peace.”*

And the meaning of vv. 16-17 of Matityahu Chapter [nine](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html), then becomes obvious, that is, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) does not telescope days of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) or fast to the Messianic Age, nor does [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) or fast whilst in the very presence of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html). However, he did indicate that after his death, “The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.” Thus it becomes incumbent upon us to fast together with all of our noble [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) brethren on these [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) most solemn days of the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and 9th of Ab.

Another [two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) important points, which require some profound mystical understanding, and which you probably have heard me often [speak](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) about are:

1. the proper and mystical understanding of the concept of “[Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html),” and
2. that the mournings of the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) and 9th of Ab must be seasons for returning to “truth” and “peace”[[51]](#footnote-51) and thus said mournings should be mournings of joy as the Messianic Era is closely approaching to us.

# XIV. [Events](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html)

The following is a comprehensive list of the tragedies of Tisha B’Ab that Ernest Ostrander compiled from the internet. They are tragedies of various degrees, and he had no means of verifying the more obscure items. Also, a few of the dates are suspect. Nevertheless, from the best of what he has found, here’s the list:

1. 1312 BC - The [sin](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of the spies who examined Canaan caused [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) to decree that the Bnai Yisrael who left Egypt would not be permitted to enter the [land of Israel](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

2. 421 BC - Destruction of the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) [temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) by the Babylonians.

3. 70 AD - Destruction of the second [temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) by the Romans.

4. 132 AD (135AD?) - Betar, the last fortress to hold out against the Romans during the Bar Kochba revolt fell, sealing the fate of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) people. Over 100,000 [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were slaughtered.

5. 133 AD (136AD?) - [One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) year after the fall of Betar, the [Temple](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html) area was plowed.

6. 136 AD - [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) destroyed and the Roman [city](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) Aelia Capitolina established in its place.

7. 1095 AD – [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) Crusade declared by Pope Urban II. 10,000 [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) killed in [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) month of the Crusade. Crusades bring death and destruction to thousands of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html), totally obliterate many [communities](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html) in Rhineland and France.

8. 1290 AD – Expulsion of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from England by King Edward I, accompanied by pogroms and confiscation of books and property.

9. 1492 AD - Expulsion of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from Spain by King Ferdinand.

10. 1555 AD - Ghetto established in Rome. Pope Paul IV moves all the [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) into a foul smelling area near the Tiber River. The [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were forced to pay for the wall that was built around the ghetto.

11. 1571 AD – The ghetto of Florence Italy was established.

12. 1648 AD – [Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) thousand [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) perished in Konstantynow in what were [known](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) as the Chmielnicki massacres

13. 1670 AD – The last group of [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) were forced to leave Austria.

14. 1882 AD – The Turkish government, which then controlled the Holy-land, barred immigration of Russian and Rumanian [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) and also banned the sale of land in Palestine to [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html).

15. 1914 AD – WW1 begins. 75% of all [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) lived in war zones.

16. 1940 AD – Himler presented his plan to the Nazi Party on the “Final Solution” to the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) problem

17. 1941 AD – Himler’s plan was implemented.

18. 1941 AD – A decree went forth expelling all [Jews](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) from Hungarian Ruthenia

19. 1942 AD – Deportation from Warsaw Ghetto to the concentration [camp](file:///D:\Word\Av\stages.html) at Treblinka began.

20. 1989 AD – Iraq walks out of talks with Kuwait

21. 1990 AD – Gulf war starts.

22. 1994 AD – Deadly bombing of the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) [community](file:///D:\Word\Av\community.html) center in Argentina, killing 86 and wounding 300.

# XV. [Mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html)

***Taanit, 30*** *“He who mourns for* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *will* [*merit*](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html) *to share in her joy”.*

[Yaaqov](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) Avienu refused to be consoled for [Yosef](file:///D:\Word\Av\joseph.html) during the entire [twenty](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html)-[two](file:///D:\Word\Av\two.html) years that they were apart. Normative [halacha](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) tells us that our [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) ends after a year. Why did [Yaaqov](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) continue to [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) for so long? This question has great import to us because we also ignore the [halacha](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) when we continue to [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) for the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) 2000 years after it was destroyed.

As [Yaaqov](file:///D:\Word\Av\israelja.html) mourned so we [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html). What is the [connection](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html)?

[Mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) is meant to end when we resolve the emotional and intellectual conflict which is created by the death of a loved [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html). This can only be accomplished when we are certain that our loved [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) has died. So, for example, if we hear that a serviceman is “Missing In Action” (MIA), then we find it difficult to stop [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html), even after many years, because there is no certainty of death.

This resolves our conundrum. We continue to [mourn](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) for the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) because we have a certain [knowledge](file:///D:\Word\Av\knowledge.html) that it will be rebuilt. In fact, we have a specific promise to that effect as indicated in the [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html):

***Makkoth 24b*** *Long ago, as Rabban Gamaliel, R. Eleazar b. ‘Azariah, R. Joshua and R. Akiba were* [*walking*](file:///D:\Word\Av\walking.html) *on the road, they heard the noise of the crowds at Rome [on travelling] from Puteoli, a hundred and* [*twenty*](file:///D:\Word\Av\twenty.html) *miles away. They all fell a-*[*weeping*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*, but R. Akiba seemed merry. Said they to him: Wherefore are you merry? Said he to them: Wherefore are you* [*weeping*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*? Said they: These heathens who bow down to images and burn* [*incense*](file:///D:\Word\Av\ketoret.html) *to idols live in safety and ease, whereas our* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)*, the ‘Footstool’ of our God is burnt down by* [*fire*](file:///D:\Word\Av\fire.html)*, and should we then not* [*weep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*? He replied: Therefore, am I merry. If they that offend Him fare thus, how much better shall fare they that do obey Him! Once again they were* [*coming*](file:///D:\Word\Av\coming.html) *up to* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *together, and just as they came to Mount Scopus they saw a fox emerging from the Holy of Holies. They fell a-*[*weeping*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) *and R. Akiba seemed merry. Wherefore, said they to him, are you merry? Said he: Wherefore are you* [*weeping*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*? Said they to him: A place of which it was once said, And the common man that draweth nigh shall be put to death[[52]](#footnote-52), is now become the haunt of foxes, and should we not* [*weep*](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html)*? Said he to them: Therefore am I merry; for it is written, And I will take to Me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the* [*priest*](file:///D:\Word\Av\priests.html) *and Zechariah the Son of Jeberechiah[[53]](#footnote-53). Now what* [*connection*](file:///D:\Word\Av\connection.html) *has this Uriah the* [*priest*](file:///D:\Word\Av\priests.html) *with Zechariah? Uriah lived during the times of the* [*first*](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html)[*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)*, while [the other,] Zechariah lived [and prophesied] during the second* [*Temple*](file:///D:\Word\Av\temple.html)*; but Holy-Writ linked the [later] prophecy of Zechariah with the [earlier] prophecy of Uriah, In the [earlier] prophecy [in the days] of Uriah it is written, Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field etc[[54]](#footnote-54). In Zechariah it is written, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*, so long as Uriah’s [threatening] prophecy had not had its fulfilment, I had misgivings lest Zechariah’s prophecy might not be fulfilled; now that Uriah’s prophecy has been [literally] fulfilled, it is quite certain that Zechariah’s prophecy also is to find its literal fulfilment. Said they to him: Akiba, you have comforted us! Akiba, you have comforted us!*

This also resolves a second conundrum: Why does Chazal[[55]](#footnote-55) call this day a [*moed*](file:///D:\Word\Av\settimes.html), a feast day, a [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) of joy? The answer is found in the rebuilding of the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html) and in the words of the Prophet:

***Zechariah 8:19*** *Thus saith* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *of hosts; The fast of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html) *month, and the fast of the* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html)*, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.*

Now we can understand the opening, enigmatic, quote:

***Taanit, 30*** *“He who mourns for* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) *will* [*merit*](file:///D:\Word\Av\merit.html) *to share in her joy”.*

# XVI. Lowest To Highest

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) week before [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html),[[56]](#footnote-56) we mark another significant moment in the [Jewish](file:///D:\Word\Av\gen-jew.html) [calendar](file:///D:\Word\Av\calendar.html), Tisha B’Ab, the [holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) that marks the destruction of the [First](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) and Second Temples in [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html). Tu B’[Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html)’s proximity to Tisha B’[Av](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html) – exactly [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) days, the traditional length of the [cycle](file:///D:\Word\Av\cycles.html) of completion, reminds us that even after our darkest moments, joy and wholeness are possible.

Tisha B’Ab falls on the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab. [Seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) days later we celebrate the feast of [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html).

Tisha B’Ab is the *saddest* and lowest day of the year.

[Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) is the most *joyful* and the highest day of the year.

The saddest day of the year is separated from the most joyous day of the year by only [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) days!

On both days Tachanun omitted from our [prayers](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html).[[57]](#footnote-57) This suggests that both days are really days of joy. How can this be? The Tanach provides a clue for us:

***Zechariah 8:18-19*** *Again the word of* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty came to me. This is what* [*HaShem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) *Almighty says: “The fasts of the* [*fourth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\four.html)*,* [*fifth*](file:///D:\Word\Av\five.html)*, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy* [*festivals*](file:///D:\Word\Av\festivals.html) *for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”*

But there is more…

[One](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) traditional belief is that on [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html), in the fortieth year of wandering in the desert, the Israelites were forgiven for the [sins](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) of the spies and the people who reacted harshly to the report that the spies had given them.[[58]](#footnote-58) The remaining [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) of Israelites still alive from the desert [generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) were spared from death[[59]](#footnote-59) and allowed to enter the Promised Land. “*It is the day on which the* [*generation*](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) *of the wilderness ceased to die out*”.[[60]](#footnote-60) [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) marks the [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html) when we move from the desert to the Promised Land.

[Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) provides a contrast of joyous celebration following the ever-deepening gloom and [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) of the [Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) Weeks. [Coming](file:///D:\Word\Av\coming.html) [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) days after Tisha B’Ab, [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) symbolically serves as the end of the *shiva,* the [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) days of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) for the dead. Just as the mourner ends shiva on the morning of the seventh day, so may we cast off the blackness of despair and go out of our house of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) wearing white and dancing and courting in the fields as did the maidens of old in Israel!

From [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) we are ready to move on to [Elul](file:///D:\Word\Av\elul.html), a prelude to the High [Holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) season with its themes of renewal and return. In fact, the period of [Elul](file:///D:\Word\Av\elul.html) embodies a process of courtship between us and [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html). This theme of courtship is captured in the traditional belief that the [Hebrew](file:///D:\Word\Av\hebrew.html) [letters](file:///D:\Word\Av\letters.html) of the word [*Elul*](file:///D:\Word\Av\elul.html)are an abbreviation for the phrase *Ani le-dodi ve-dodi li*, “I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine”, referring to [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) and Israel. Estranged from each other during the [Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) Weeks, Israel and [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) rediscover each other beginning with [Tu B’Ab](file:///D:\Word\Av\tubav.html) and initiate the slow, and at times painful, process of becoming lovers again. This process climaxes with [Yom Kippur](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html)im, when we are forgiven for that original breach of faith, the incident of the golden calf, which began this whole process of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) and renewing on the 17th of [Tammuz](file:///D:\Word\Av\feasts.html).

In Parshat Emor,[[61]](#footnote-61) the Torah lists the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) and dates of every Yom Tov throughout the year. However after commencing with [Pesach](file:///D:\Word\Av\passover.html) and [Shavuot](file:///D:\Word\Av\shavuot.html), the Torah strangely digresses to the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) of Leket, Shichicha, and Pe’ah (the various gifts that [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) must leave in his field for the poor people who would circulate the fields looking for grain that was left.) Then the Torah continues with [Rosh HaShana](file:///D:\Word\Av\teruah.html)h, [Yom Kippur](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html)im, and [Succoth](file:///D:\Word\Av\succoth.html). Rashi explains the reason the Torah digresses to tell us the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) of the gifts of the poor people is to [teach](file:///D:\Word\Av\teacher.html) us that if [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) is meticulous in his observance of these gifts, it is as if he built the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html). However these [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) still seem to be out of place. Why do we need to [know](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) these [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) specifically here right in the middle of the listing of all the Yamim Tovim?

Rav Schwab[[62]](#footnote-62) offers a beautiful [insight](file:///D:\Word\Av\insights.html): Perhaps the Torah here is hinting to us the [FUTURE](file:///D:\Word\Av\future.html) Yom Tov which will be celebrated between [Shavuot](file:///D:\Word\Av\shavuot.html) and [Rosh HaShana](file:///D:\Word\Av\teruah.html)h. Today in [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), Tisha B’Ab is a day of [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) and [crying](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) over the many pains and oppressions that transpired during our long and painful history. However, [one](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) cannot [cry](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) over spilled milk, and therefore our [tears](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) are not [tears](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of desparation but rather [tears](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) over our past [sins](file:///D:\Word\Av\sin.html) which brought about the punishments we endured, and [tears](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of hope for the [future](file:///D:\Word\Av\future.html) that we be [redeemed](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) from the long [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) soon. We daven on Tisha B’Ab that [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) finally hearken to our pleas and arouse [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) to deliver the final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html). When [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) does indeed come, Tisha B’Ab will be transformed into a day of joy and gladness. That day, which in [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) represents all the tragic pains of our 2,000 year [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html), will then be a representation of the opposite. Tisha B’Ab will become the very symbol and reminder of the eternal [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) unifying all Israel as a complete unit in [Yerushalayim](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html).

The Torah here hints to us that we should await this Yom Tov although it has yet to be established, by telling us the [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) of these [mitzvot](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) whose reward, as Rashi explains, is the rebuilding of the [Beit HaMikdash](file:///D:\Word\Av\mikdash.html). [Perhaps the reason the Torah specifically chooses these [laws](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html) is to remind us that the reason why we still remain in [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) is because we have not yet rectified the cause of our descending into [exile](file:///D:\Word\Av\galuyot.html) in the [first](file:///D:\Word\Av\one.html) place, sinat chinam (baseless hate). The key to transforming Tisha B’Ab into that [holiday](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) can only come from our caring about others prioritizing the poor and needy among us.]

# XVII. Conclusion

The “[Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) weeks of Rebuke” are followed by the “[Seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) weeks of Consolation”. [Seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) weekly readings describing the [future](file:///D:\Word\Av\future.html) [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html) and the rebuilding of the [marriage](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashal.html) of [HaShem](file:///D:\Word\Av\hashem.html) and Israel. These [ten](file:///D:\Word\Av\ten.html) weeks are a single unit of [time](file:///D:\Word\Av\time.html). [Three](file:///D:\Word\Av\three.html) of tragedy and [seven](file:///D:\Word\Av\seven.html) of consolation. These [ten](file:///D:\Word\Av\ten.html) weeks allude to the [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) who is a unity of parts. Israel makes up the [body](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html) of [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) and the [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) is the [head](file:///D:\Word\Av\body.html). The [Mashiach](file:///D:\Word\Av\mashiach.html) will bring the final [redemption](file:///D:\Word\Av\redemption.html), May it happen speedily in our days!

*“*[*Pray*](file:///D:\Word\Av\prayer.html) *for the peace of* [*Jerusalem*](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html)*:*

*May those who love you be secure.*

*May there be peace within your walls*

*And security within your citadels.”*

*Tehillim 122:6-7*

This [study](file:///D:\Word\Av\study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

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Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. Yalkut Shimoni, Pinchas 782 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Reflexions & Introspection Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos*, Torah Insights of Hagon HaGadol Rav Moshe Shapiro, by Moshe Antebi [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tanach is an acronym for Torah (the [law](file:///D:\Word\Av\law.html)), Neviim (the Prophets), and Ketubim (the Writings). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.etzion.org.il/en/holidays/three-weeks/sinai-and-tziyyon [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. e.g. no weddings, parties, haircutting etc. - see Shulhan Arukh Orach Hayyim #551 and the Aharonim ad loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Sotah 35a [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Rashi Debarim (Deuteronomy) 11:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. see Rambam, MT Melakhim 11:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. see Rambam, MT Ta'aniot, 1:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html) 1:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ibid. Chap. 14, see Rashi [Exodus](file:///D:\Word\Av\exodus.html) 18:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ta’anit 29a [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See for example Berachot 3a, Chagiga 5b [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Eichah Rabbati 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ramban’s glosses to Sefer Hamitzvot, positive [mitzvah](file:///D:\Word\Av\cmds613.html) no. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Rambam, ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Berakhot 32b [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bamidbar ([Numbers](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)) 14:45 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Pesachim 54b [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The source for this is to be found in the [Yerushalami](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html), [Rosh HaShana](file:///D:\Word\Av\teruah.html) 3:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. OC 559:4; see the commentary of the Vilna Gaon [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Taz, OC 557:2; see commentary of Dagul Me-revava [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Eikha 3:8; see Berakhot 32b [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See Pesachim 54b, “There is no difference between Tisha B’Ab and [Yom Kippur](file:///D:\Word\Av\kippur.html) except...” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ta’anit 30a [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. these are not forbidden to a regular mourner; see Rashi and the Rif, as well as Rav Soloveitchik’s essay in “Shiurim Le-zekher Abba Mari” regarding public fasts [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Rav Soloveitchik deals at length with the similarity to [mourning](file:///D:\Word\Av\mourning.html) customs. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Many of these customs are excerpts or extracts from the Ben Ish Chai. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. OC 554:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Lamentations 2:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Rav Ovadia [Yosef](file:///D:\Word\Av\joseph.html), Teshuvot Yechave [Daat](file:///D:\Word\Av\daat.html) 1:41 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Deuteronomy 4:25-40 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. see Sof. 18:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [Jerusalem](file:///D:\Word\Av\city.html) [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html), Berachos 2:4; Eichah Rabbah 1:51 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Sichos of Devarim, Vo’eschanan, 5751. 5748 Acharei 5746 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Eicha 3:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Petichta, [Midrash](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) Eicha 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. From *Sound the Great* [*Shofar*](file:///D:\Word\Av\shofar.html), p.74 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 7:4; cf. *Da’as Zekeinim* to Bamidbar 28:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Bechorot 8b [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Introduction to Eicha Rabba, #23 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Encyclopedia Judaica [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. [Talmud](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) Yerushalami, Ta’an 4:8, 68c [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Bereshit [Genesis] 28:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Rabbi [Yitzchak](file:///D:\Word\Av\isaac.html) Ginsburgh [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Berachot 5a [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Old Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Zechariah 8:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Bamidbar 1:51 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Yeshayahu 8:2. Cf. Zechariah 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Micah 3:12; Yiremiyahu 26:18-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Rav. [Yosef](file:///D:\Word\Av\joseph.html) Kaira, Shulchan Aruch: Orach Chaim 559:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Now often referred to as *Hag Ha’Ahava* – The [Festival](file:///D:\Word\Av\festival.html) of Love. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *Shulhan Arukh*  [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Bamidbar ([Numbers](file:///D:\Word\Av\nchart.html)) 13:1 - 14:45 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. [*Midrash*](file:///D:\Word\Av\orallaw.html) *Eicha Rabba* tells us that [fifteen](file:///D:\Word\Av\fifteen.html) thousand of the “[generation](file:///D:\Word\Av\toldot.html) of the wilderness” would die every year on the [ninth](file:///D:\Word\Av\nine.html) of Ab. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Ta’anit* 29a [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. **Shimon (Simon) Schwab** (December 30, 1908 – February 13, 1995) was an Orthodox rabbi and communal leader in Germany and the United States. Educated in Frankfurt am Main and in the *yeshivot* of Lithuania, he was rabbi in Ichenhausen, Bavaria, after immigration to the United States in Baltimore, and from 1958 until his death at Khal Adath Jeshurun in Washington Heights, Manhattan. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)