

TISHA B'AV

What and When

The Hebrew words *Tisha B'Av* literally mean the 9th day of the Hebrew month of *Av*. This holy day, generally occurs between mid-July and mid-August. *Tisha B'Av* is the most tragic day of the Jewish calendar. The day commemorates the destruction of the First Jewish Temple in Jerusalem the year 586 Before the Common Era (BCE), as well as the Second Jewish Temple in the year 70 of the Common Era (CE). With the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jewish people were exiled from the holy city of Jerusalem and were scattered throughout the world. *Tisha B'Av* is also seen as a day to mourn other tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people from the Edict of Expulsion from England in 1290 and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, to the mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II.

Customs in the Weeks & Days Before the Holiday:

The three weeks leading up to *Tisha B'Av* are considered a period of mourning. Generally, joyous Jewish celebrations, such as weddings, do not take place during this time, or on *Tisha B'Av* itself. Mourning customs become more pronounced during the nine days leading up to and including *Tisha B'Av*. Some observant Jews may refrain from cutting their hair or may avoid some joyous activities such as dancing, listening to music or going to the movies during this period of time.

Some CJE dietary programs will observe the tradition of not serving meat during the nine days leading up to *Tisha B'Av*. The restriction on serving meat does not apply to the Sabbath (Friday night or Saturday meals). *Tisha B'Av* itself is a fast day.

Customs and Observances on *Tisha B'Av*

On Erev *Tisha B'Av* (the evening before the 9th of *Av*), it is customary to chant the verses of the Biblical Book of Lamentations in a sad tone during the evening synagogue service.

On *Tisha B'Av* many traditional Jews observe a full fast day (refraining from eating and drinking for 25 hours). The fast begins

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If you have any questions, call Susan Buchbinder at X1695, or Rabbi Michael Schorin at x3253

at sundown on Erev Tisha B'Av (evening before 9th of Av) and concludes until one hour after sun down on Tisha B'Av Day.

According to Jewish law, anyone who has to take medication with food or water, or whose physical or mental health would be jeopardized by fasting, is exempt from fasting. Fasting on *Tisha B'Av* can be especially dangerous for many older people. Dehydration is a particular danger fasting clients might face.

If you know of clients who wish to fast, but fasting may put their health at risk, please refer them to their own rabbi and/or doctor, or let them know that they can speak to CJE's chaplain, Rabbi Michael Schorin. Rabbis may instruct clients not to fast since Jewish law requires that every effort be made to sustain life, and never to put one's health at risk by fasting for religious purposes.

Joyous celebrations, and programs with music, are traditionally avoided in the nine days leading up to and including *Tisha B'Av*. **Programming in CJE sites on the day of *Tisha B'Av* should be subdued.** There should be no celebrations or live music programs at CJE sites on *Tisha B'Av* itself, although exceptions can be made in programs for those with dementia and other frailties.

If you have questions about the appropriateness of programs on this day, or any other questions about *Tisha B'Av*, please contact Rabbi Michael Schorin (x3253) or Susan Buchbinder (x1695).

For more information check out this great on-line resource:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Tisha_BAv.shtml?HYJH

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