

Tisha b'Av

Throughout the year, there are seven days of fasting according to the Jewish law; five of which are considered minor and the remaining two, major.

The minor fastings are those who must be fulfilled from sunrise to sunset, so you must fast for approximately 12 hours. The five minor fastings are: Tamuz, 17, the Guedalia fast, Tevet, 10, Esther's fast and the fasting of the first-born, just before Pesach.

The major fastings, on the other side, are the ones that are required to last from dusk to dusk, they are, approximately, 25 hours long. These days are: Yom Kipur and Tisha b'Av (9 Av).

According to what we are told by the Mishna in masajet Taanit 4:6, our forefathers suffered five calamities on Tisha b'Av.

1. The people of Israel were forbidden the entrance to Eretz Israel due to the sin committed by the explorers, and were made to wonder for forty years in the desert until the whole generation died away.
2. The destruction of the First Temple in the year 586 bce.
3. The destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70.
4. The fall of Betar in the year 132.
5. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, to this classic list of calamities and bad memories, we must attach other unfortunate events that throughout history have happened on or around this day, turning it into even a sadder day.

We must mention the expulsion of the Jews from England in the year 1290 by king Edward I; the deadline the Spanish kings set in 1492 to expel the Jews from Spain; and, finally, the attack on the venue of AMIA in 1994 took place on 10 Av.

On this date we are not allowed to eat or drink, to groom, to bathe, wear leather shoes and have sexual relations.

But Tisha b'Av is more than just a fasting date. It is, literally, a day for mourning. That is why it is accustomed to pray with a starker intonation, and, just as in "tango", in a half light. It is also a custome to sit on the florr (just as in a shiva) and to light candles to enable us to read the Meguilat Eija (Lamentations), attributed to the prophet Jeremiah.

May G'd allow us, Masortim Jews, wholly identified with the observance of the halacha, and deeply involved with Israel, to realise that by remembering everyone of these such traumatic events of our history, we are not only fulfilling our laws and traditions but also we are building an important part of our present and our future.

May His will be that we can contemplate on our days the words of the prophet coming to life "...this fastings will be for the house of Juda, joy and rejoicing and festivities. Therefore love truth and peace." (Zacharias 8:19).

Tzom Kal,

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MERCAZ



Marom AmLat



Masorti AmLat