When Tisha B'Av Begins on Motzei Shabbat: A Practical Guide

As this year the fast of Tisha B'Av begins Motzei Shabbat, there are a number of unique laws and customs observed. Our hope and fervent prayer is that we see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah Chap. 8, and this year we will be feasting instead of fasting. In the meantime, below are some guidelines and practical tips to help you navigate this year's differences.

EREV SHABBAT

As we abstain from meat and wine during the Nine Days, one should be careful not to eat any meat while cooking for Shabbat. In order to ensure that the food is properly seasoned, one may briefly taste a meat dish and then spit it out.

It is permitted to bathe or shower for Shabbat in cooler water than normal and for



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a shorter duration than usual. Sefardim may bathe without restriction.

While there are varying customs, according to most authorities one may wear his clean Shabbat clothing as usual.

As it is prohibited to prepare on Shabbat for Motzei Shabbat, it is advisable to prepare one's Megillat Eichah, Kinot, stools and chairs for sitting, and one's 'Tisha B'Av shoes' before Shabbat begins.

SHABBAT CHAZON

On Shabbat, there are no public displays of mourning. Meat and wine may be enjoyed and it is permissible to sing Zemirot at the Shabbat table.

In the afternoon, some have the custom to limit their study of Torah to areas of Torah permitted to be studied on Tisha B'av itself, like Eicha, passages from the Nevi'im, Talmud and Midrash about the destruction of the Temple, or the laws of mourning. For this reason, some skip Pirke Avot following Minchah this week. However, many authorities are lenient and permit one to study whatever area of Torah he wishes.

This year, the Seudah HaMafseket, traditionally a mournful meal, is replaced by Seudah Shlishit. At Seudah Shlishit, one may eat meat

and drink wine and have a feast fit for a king, "like King Solomon in his day," even if one does not typically serve meat and wine at the third meal on a regular Shabbat. Birkat HaMazon may be recited with a Zimmun. One should be careful to stop eating and drinking before sunset (7:39pm in Jerusalem).

At sunset, the fast and restrictions of Tisha B'Av begin, with the exception of wearing leather shoes and sitting on a regular chair, which are permitted until the departure of Shabbat (8:15pm in Jerusalem).

MOTZEI SHABBAT

At the conclusion of Shabbat, one says "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodeh L'chol," removes his leather shoes, and changes into his 'Tisha B'Av shoes' and weekday clothes, before returning to the synagogue for Ma'ariv and Eichah. In some communities, the custom is to remove one's leather shoes at the beginning of Ma'ariv, following Barchu.

Havdallah is not recited on Motzei Shabbat. Instead, a candle is lit and the blessing of *Borei Me'orei HaEish* is recited at home or in the synagogue, before the reading of Eichah.

HAVDALLAH

Havdallah is recited Sunday Night at the conclusion of the fast (8:03pm in Jerusalem), without spices or a flame. One should refrain from eating or drinking before making Havdallah. (One who must eat on Tisha B'Av for health reasons recites Havdallah prior to eating).

As we abstain from meat and wine until the 10th of Av at midday, the custom of some is to give some of the wine from Havdallah to a child who does not know how to properly mourn for Jerusalem. If no child is available, one may drink the wine himself. Alternatively, one may use grape juice or a popular beverage, ideally one which contains alcohol like

beer, but beverages like coffee, tea and soft drinks are also acceptable. Other sources permit drinking the wine.

May we merit to properly mourn this year so that soon we no longer have to mourn, as our sages promise (*Ta'anit* 30b), "All who mourn for Jerusalem will merit to see her in her joy." And may we see the Final Ge'ulah, speedily in our days. *Amein*.

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