

Tisha B'Av



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LONG ISLAND TORAH NETWORK

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The fast of Tisha B'av commemorates the Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, first by the Babylonians and again, about five centuries later, by the Romans. The fast is meant to inspire reflection, introspection and repentance. We mourn as a positive act, rebuilding our inner, spiritual world, knowing that that will lead to the redemption of the world at large.

Tisha B'av is akin to Yom Kippur – i.e. a full-day fast, from sundown until nightfall of the next day, with observance of all Five Afflictions: eating and drinking; washing and bathing; use of skin creams and oils; wearing leather shoes; and marital relations.

We also observe some customs of mourning on Tisha B'av, akin to the observances of the Shivah period. Until midday (about 1:00), we sit on or near the ground. We also refrain from Torah study, an activity which leads to joy. However, we may study material related to Tisha B'av themes: the laws of mourning, narratives of tragedy, and anything that inspires introspection and self-improvement.

On the eve of Tisha B'av (Saturday night), the Scroll of Lamentations, or Megillas Eicha, is read. This book of Scripture was written by Jeremiah, the prophet who lived through the first Destruction. The morning of Tisha B'av is spent reciting Kinot, mournful poems composed throughout the ages to commemorate the Destruction and other Jewish tragedies, down to and including the Holocaust. This expresses our conviction that all Jewish suffering stems from a common cause and serves a larger purpose.

Jewish Tradition teaches that, "Whoever mourns for Jerusalem merits to witness its consolation." This can mean that one who mourns for Jerusalem earns the reward of the Messianic Redemption. But some see another message: in mourning for Jerusalem, we taste the Redemption *today*. Connecting with our suffering also connects us with our destiny. We understand that we have a mission, that our suffering has a purpose, and that our actions matter. We know there is hope for our future, and that fills us with a deep well of joy, hope and fulfillment.