

## דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים"

### SOME DINNIM PERTAINING TO THE PERIOD FROM THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ TO THE TENTH OF AV

1. We are commanded by our Prophets to observe, by special prayers and by fasting, those days on which throughout the ages grave troubles befell our People. The purpose of these public fast-days is that we should take stock of our deeds and thoughts and resolve to turn away from the bad practices and alien ideas which caused our troubles in the first place and return to the way of life that הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא in His kindness intended for us. When we will sincerely turn back to Him, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא will grant that we behold the true Redemption and that sadness and sorrow will be banished forever, as He Himself has promised.
  
2. There are four days in our history on which great tragedies occurred and which therefore were instituted by our Prophets as public fast-days. They are:
  - [1] The third day in Tishrei, when the Jewish Governor, Gedalyoh ben Achikkom, was assassinated (in the year 3339). He had been appointed by the Babylonian king Nevuchadnetzar to look after the remnant of the Jewish People in Eretz Yisroel and when Gedalyoh was murdered by a jealous rival, the remaining Jews were killed or sold into slavery and Eretz Yisroel was laid waste completely by the enraged evil Nevuchadnetzar. With that, the exiles lost hope of rejoining the Jewish People in the Holy Land to rebuild the Nation, and the resulting destruction and desolation became the precursor of the long and terrible Exile to come. (*See Historical Note, below.*)
  
  - [2] The tenth day of Tayvays, when the siege of Yerushalaim was commenced by Nevuchadnetzar (in the year 3338) and which ended in the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and our dispersion over the whole world.
  
  - [3] The seventeenth day of Tammuz, on which through the ages five tragedies occurred:
    - [1] The Tablets of the Testimony (the לוחות) were smashed by מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ because of the sin of the Golden Calf (in the year 2448);
  
    - [2] The first public burning of our Holy Torah took place on this day. (Generally, when troubles occur, the exact dates of those troubles can become confused or forgotten, especially when the troubles increase or recur, and this is true about this event, too. Although there have, tragically, been numerous burnings of our Holy Torah, nevertheless this date marks the first such burning that was deliberate and public. Some say that this intentional contemptuous act occurred a few years before the Destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash and according to one opinion, the

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי בֵּין הַמָּצְרִים

Sefer Torah was the one written by Ezra HaSofer. On the other hand, Josephus, the historian who lived at the time of the Roman occupation of Eretz Yisroel, in the time of the Second Beis HaMikdosh, gives an account of a different burning of a Sefer Torah which occurred on the Seventeenth of Tammuz. He reports that the Romans took every opportunity to provoke the Jewish People and that violence was not uncommon. He describes how on one occasion — the date was the seventeenth of Tammuz — it happened that a Roman official was robbed on the high road near Beis Chorrion. The Roman Procurator took this opportunity to make trouble and sent a detachment of soldiers to arrest the villagers there for failing to pursue and hold the robbers. At that point, one of those soldiers seized a Sefer Torah from a nearby village, ripped it to pieces and threw it into a fire. Word of this sacrilegious deed spread through the countryside like wildfire and the Roman Procurator realized that if he failed to punish the soldier, the resulting violence would be impossible to contain and he would be blamed by Rome for not maintaining order in the country. He ordered that the perpetrator be hanged in front of the aggrieved populace and so calm returned for the time being. Yet others say that this date marks the public burning of a Sefer Torah perpetrated by the evil Apostomos and was during the persecution by the Syrian Greeks, in the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash, in the year 3823.)

- [3] An idol was set up inside the Beis HaMikdash itself (according to some, by the same Apostomos, during the time of the second Beis HaMikdash; according to others, this happened in the time of the first Beis HaMikdash and was done was by the wicked ones of our own People, in this case, by King Menasheh);
  - [4] The daily offering of the **תְּמִיד קָרְבַּן** was stopped during the siege of Yerushalaim at the time of the Destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash, which circumstance showed that **הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא** was no longer pleased with our Service; and
  - [5] The walls of the City of Yerushalaim were actually breached at the time of the Destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash, in the year 3338 (and again on the very same day at the Destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash).
- [4] The fourth fast-day is the Ninth of Av, on which day it was decreed that the generation of the **יֹצְאֵי מִצְרַיִם** aged twenty years and more who were redeemed from Egypt would die in the Wilderness and not come to Eretz Yisroel. This was because they had believed the Spies' false report about the promised Holy Land and had mourned in vain and for no reason over their fate, despite that **הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא** had said it was "a Land flowing with milk and honey." Because of this treachery, He decreed that this day would be a day of genuine mourning for the whole of **כָּל־לְיִשְׂרָאֵל** and it was on this day (Tish'a b'Av) that

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמָּצְרִים"

the first — and later the second — Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and set alight to burn to the ground. On this day, too, the town of Baysar fell, and the Bar Kochba rising, which could have brought an end to our sufferings had we merited it, was crushed, and hundreds of thousands of the Jewish People were massacred. It was on Tish'a b'Av, too, that the fateful prophecy that the site of the Beis HaMikdash would be ploughed-over was fulfilled by the evil Tyranus Rufus, the Roman Governor of Eretz Yisroel at that time. Indeed, throughout the generations, numerous massacres and killings, pogroms and mass-murders and inquisitions have made this the saddest and most tragic day in our calendar.

3. On the Seventeenth of Tammuz, as indeed on any public fast-day, it is forbidden to take any food or drink, even the smallest amount. As far as ill or weakened persons, who are greatly discomforted by fasting, are concerned, some leniencies may be exercised but in such cases a Rav should be consulted. But even such people who are allowed not to fast should eat and drink only that which is necessary for their recovery and health. Sensible children who understand what the fast-day commemorates, too, should be given only that which is necessary for their well-being, not sweets and treats.
4. A person who is ill or in pain is not required to fast the Fast of Gedalyoh, nor the Tenth of Tayvais nor the Seventeenth of Tammuz. As far as Tish'a b'Av is concerned, however, even if one is in pain, one is nevertheless required to fast and one is absolved from fasting only if one is suffering greatly or one is old or weak and may become ill if one fasted (even if there is no danger to life). A person with a headache or similar discomfort is nevertheless required to fast. (Concerning Yom Kippur, however, everyone over Bar Mitzvah or Bas Mitzvah is required to fast and the only exception is if fasting would pose a danger to life.) In all such cases of someone not being able to fast on any public fast-day, a Rav must be consulted. Generally speaking, if a person is not required to fast because fasting would pose a danger to him, then it is indeed *forbidden* for him to fast.
5. With the exception of Tish'a b'Av and Yom Kippur, which both start the evening before, all public fast-days start with dawn. It would therefore be permitted to eat breakfast before dawn (dawn is 72 minutes before sun-rise and the precise time is given in the better kind of *Lu'ach*) provided one made a condition to do so before retiring at night. Again, with the exception of Tish'a b'Av and Yom Kippur, on a public fast-day it is permitted to wear leather footwear and to wash oneself. Nevertheless, the accepted custom is not to take a hot shower or bath on any public fast-day unless this is necessary for medical reasons. Similarly, if it is a very hot day and one is suffering from the heat, it is permitted to take a cold shower to cool off. (But it is proper for adults to refrain from swimming on a fast-day.)
6. Some authorities permit rinsing out one's mouth on a public fast-day (but not on Tish'a b'Av or Yom Kippur) but others allow this only for those who are in considerable distress. But in any case this rinsing out the mouth must be done with

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים"

- only the minimum of water and leaning forward so that no water goes to the back of the mouth and the throat. (Visiting the dentist on a public fast-day, which will inevitably necessitate rinsing out the mouth, should therefore be avoided if possible.)
7. Medicines prescribed by a doctor, or a course of medicine which must not be interrupted, may be taken on a fast-day and if one has difficulty swallowing pills without water one may drink the small amount of water needed to swallow them, without the need to ruin the taste of the water beforehand. If one suffers from a headache or discomfort, pain-killers and non-prescribed medications may be taken, but taking these with water (if this is necessary) is not permitted unless the water is first made to have a bad taste. (If these questions arise about fasting on Yom Kippur, however, a Rav must be consulted.)
  8. Shabbos is celebrated by us as HaShem's "Day of Delight" and therefore no public mourning is allowed on Shabbos. When one of these public fast-days falls to be on a Shabbos, therefore, it is postponed to Sunday. Yom Kippur, which is not at all a day of mourning but is in reality a Yom Tov — albeit of great solemnity — on which the Torah commands us to fast, is therefore observed on its proper date (the tenth day of Tishrei) even if it should fall to be a Shabbos.
  9. Since it was on the seventeenth day of Tammuz (שִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר בְּתַמּוּז) that the walls of Yerushalaim were breached, therefore from that day on until after Tish'a b'Av we observe a form of mourning and all types of rejoicing are prohibited during these Three Weeks. Marriages do not take place, but a סְעוּדַת תְּנָאִים is permitted. (Even after Rosh Chodesh Av to arrange an engagement is allowed, but without a סְעוּדָה.) Other kinds of joy and celebration are not allowed, with the exception of a סְעוּדַת בְּרִית מִלָּה, a פְּדִיּוֹן הַבֶּן or a סִיּוּם מִסְכָּתָא. Listening to music is forbidden, and even if one earns one's livelihood as a musician one is allowed to play (to a non-Jewish audience) only up to Rosh Chodesh Av, from when it is forbidden. (It is likewise forbidden on the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Tenth of Tayvais.) Practising music is not allowed from Rosh Chodesh Av, too, although merely practising scales and not musical pieces as such is permitted.
  10. As for mourners, having a haircut or shaving are prohibited during these Three Weeks unless special circumstances prevail, but in such cases a Rav must be consulted to ascertain whether or not leniency may be exercised. (If there is a בְּרִית מִלָּה, the מוֹהֵל, the סַנְדֵק (that is, the one who holds the baby during the בְּרִית מִלָּה) and the father of the baby may have a haircut and shave, but only if the בְּרִית is before the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls.)
  11. Ideally, one should not put oneself in a position where one makes the Brochoh "שְׂהַחֲיִנוּ" and therefore we do not wear or buy new clothes, new fruits, etc. (although on Shabbos one may say the Brochoh "שְׂהַחֲיִנוּ" should the occasion arise). Obviously, shopping expeditions which make one glad are out of place at this time of year, but one may buy new clothes at this time if they will not be available later, or if

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים"

they will not be available later at this price, but one may not wear them until after the Three Weeks. (In any case, the Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" is recited only when the garment is fit to wear: if it is necessary to have Shaatnez removed, the Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" cannot be recited until the garment comes back from the retailing.) Items of clothing that do not require the Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" (shoes, underwear, etc.) may be bought and worn for the first time, until Rosh Chodesh Av. As just said, the Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" on new fruits may be said on Shabbos but if the new fruit will not last until Shabbos (and might not be available after Tish'a b'Av) the new fruit may be eaten and the Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" may be said even during the week. The Brochah "שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ" said for a פְּדִיוֹן הַבֶּן is said even after Rosh Chodesh Av.

12. From Rosh Chodesh Av the period known as "The Nine Days" commences and all types of luxury and pleasure are forbidden. Since this time of year has, through the ages, been one of grave suffering for our People, when it can be seen that הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא removes from us, to a degree, His loving protection of us because of our stubborn disregard of His Torah, therefore we observe even more strictly the forms of mourning so as to bring us to our senses to return to Him. At this time of year, therefore, when הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא has shown through events in our history His displeasure and anger, we are not allowed to place ourselves in a position where we might need His protection more than usual lest it might not be forthcoming and so swimming and other such potentially dangerous activities are forbidden.
13. During these Nine Days, except for Shabbos, eating meat and meat dishes and drinking wine is not allowed, for eating meat and drinking wine tend to make one feel happy and contented. Furthermore, by abstaining from meat and wine, we bring to mind the lack of the meat of the קְרָבָנוֹת and the libations of wine on the מִזְבֵּחַ since the Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. (Food cooked in meaty vessels but otherwise free of meat ingredients may be eaten.) Nevertheless, at a סְעוּדַת בְּרִית מִלָּה, a סְעוּדַת פְּדִיוֹן הַבֶּן or a סִיּוּם מִסְכָּתָא it is allowed to serve meat and wine and those close to the family or close to the celebrants may also be invited and may partake of the סְעוּדָה. The wine of Havdolloh during these Nine Days, however, should be drunk by a young child, if possible. If this is not possible, the one who makes Havdolloh may drink it.
14. Building work should be suspended during the Nine Days, unless it is required for regular dwelling. Therefore, a holiday home, a patio and other such non-essential construction work should be halted or postponed (unless a financial loss would be incurred). Painting and decorating should not be done and likewise work on a pleasure garden is not permitted in the Nine Days. Building work for a Mitzvah (a Shule or Mikveh, for instance) is permitted and if building work is necessary to avoid further damage (repairing a leaking roof, for example) then it may be done even if it is not for a Mitzvah.
15. The דִּין is that during the Nine Days, having a bath is not allowed except on Erev Shabbos if this is one's usual habit (but on עֶרֶב שַׁבָּת חִזוּן it is forbidden) and one is

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים"

permitted to wash one's face, hands and feet only. An ill or weak person is allowed to take a bath if the doctor so advises, as it is only bathing for pleasure or refreshment that is forbidden. The Gemorroh speaks of an "אִיסְטָנִים," that is, a person who is particularly delicate or sensitive about his creature comforts and is likely to feel considerable distress and even unwell if these are severely curtailed and a certain degree of leniency for such people is allowed. Of course, those who are able to comply fully with the דִּין should do so. For after all, "כְּדַאי הוּא בֵּית אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ" — "surely the Destruction of the Holy House of our G-d deserves our commemoration by our denying ourselves our creature comforts" for a few days in the year. Nevertheless, nowadays, with the high standard of personal hygiene and bodily cleanliness that has become the norm (because of the ready availability of hot and cold running water and soaps and shampoos) it has become the general practice to allow the leniencies of the אִיסְטָנִים spoken of in the Gemorroh and to permit showering or bathing, especially when it is hot and one tends to perspire more. Having said that, it must be remembered that even if this concession is allowed, one is only permitted to shower or bathe to wash away the sweat and grime: bathing for pleasure is forbidden. Therefore, the water temperature should be a little too hot or a little too cold for pleasure and only a quick shower or bath should be taken.

16. Cutting one's nails is allowed during the Nine Days but only up to the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls. However, for a Mitzvah (for instance, a מוֹהֵל who needs to trim his nails for a בְּרִית מִילָה ) it is allowed even in the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls. The use of deodorant is permitted (and if the deodorant is not perfumed, its use is permitted even on Tish'a b'Av itself).
17. As can be seen from the above, there are various restrictions that apply to "the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls" which are more severe than those of the Nine Days. However, if the ninth day of Av falls to be on Sunday, the generally accepted practice is that there is, in effect, no "week in which Tish'a b'Av falls." Even if the ninth day of Av falls to be on Shabbos, and the fast-day, together with all its דִּינִים of public mourning, is postponed to Sunday the tenth of Av (and one would therefore have thought that the preceding week should indeed be counted as "the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls") nevertheless, the generally accepted practice in this case, too, is that in effect there is no "week in which Tish'a b'Av falls."
18. With regard to the washing and changes of clothing (which also is considered a luxury and pleasure in this sad time) the דִּין is as follows:
  - [a] During the Three Weeks until the Nine Days commence:— as is usual.
  - [b] During the Nine Days:— one is not allowed to have one's clothes cleaned (even for use after Tish'a b'Av) and one may not wear cleaned clothes for the first time. (Clothes that have been worn for half-an-hour and then put away for further use are not considered as "newly cleaned.") Although there are some very scrupulous people who do not wear Shabbos clothes at all on the Shabbos

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים"

before Tish'a b'Av (called "שַׁבַּת הַזֵּוּן") the custom generally prevails that on Shabbos one may wear Shabbos clothes even if they are newly cleaned (but not if they are new) — this, even if Shabbos is on the ninth of Av itself.

(According to this prevailing custom, if one forgot to prepare enough shirts before the Nine Days, one would be permitted to change shirts in the course of the Shabbos and put them aside for use during the coming week of the Nine Days. However, to wear a garment on Shabbos *only* so as to prepare it for use during the coming week would be forbidden because on Shabbos one is not allowed to do anything (even something that is not itself forbidden as a *Melochoh* or a *Gezayroh*) if it is clearly only in preparation for the weekday. Therefore, this changing on Shabbos would be allowed only if this shirt (or whatever) is of a kind that one would otherwise ordinarily wear on Shabbos.)

- [c] Clothing which is worn directly on the skin (underwear, socks, pyjamas, etc.) may be changed as needed to avoid irritation or discomfort, and similarly if one's outer garments become dirty or unpleasantly smelly they may be changed, too.
  - [d] The clothes of little children (and others who tend to dirty their clothes constantly and therefore need many changes of clothes) may be washed even during the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls if this is necessary, but this should be done in private.
19. These דִּינִים apply also to bed-linen, tablecloths, towels, etc., too, and these may not be changed during the Nine Days (except that tablecloths may be changed for Shabbos) unless they become very dirty.
  20. For a בְּרִית מִלָּה during the Nine Days, the מוֹהֵל, the סַנְדֵק and the parents of the child may change to newly-cleaned clothes and even wear Shabbos clothes and so may the woman who carries the baby into the בְּרִית (called "the *Kvatterin*") but not the man ("the *Kvatter*") who takes the child from her.
  21. On עֶרֶב תְּשׁוּעָה בָּאָב before Mincha, the main meal before the fast is taken, and at Mincha no תְּהַנּוּן is said. Towards evening we wash for bread and seat ourselves on the floor (or on seats lower than twelve inches, or thirty centimetres, from the ground) and partake of the mourners' meal of dry bread dipped in some ashes, a hard-boiled egg and a drink of water. This meal — called "סְעוּדָה הַמַּפְסְקָת" — should be eaten by each one separately and not in company (but in any case בְּרַכַּת הַמְזוּן is not recited (בְּזִימוֹן) and care must be taken to finish the meal when it is yet day, before sun-down. (If one did not eat before Mincha, it is permitted to eat a regular meal before the סְעוּדָה הַמַּפְסְקָת.) After this meal it is permitted to eat and drink till sun-down so long as one did not intend to start the fast with the end of the סְעוּדָה הַמַּפְסְקָת and, since the דִּינִים of אֲבִילוֹת do not apply until the evening, one does not sit on the ground (or on a low chair) until sun-down.
  22. After the סְעוּדָה הַמַּפְסְקָת, we take off our leather shoes and they are not worn until

## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — "בֵּין הַמַּצְרִים" דִּינֵי

- after Tish'a b'Av. Shoes which are even only partly leather are also forbidden to be worn on Tish'a b'Av.
23. Towards evening we go to Shule (where the lights are dimmed and the פְּרוּכָת of the אֲרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ is removed) and עֲרֵבִית is davvened slowly and mournfully, followed by מְגִילַת אֵיכָה and קִינּוֹת. After this, we say וְכוּ' וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ, וְכוּ' and the חֲזַן says קְדִישׁ (without תְּתַקַּבֵּל) followed by לְשִׁבְחָהּ.
24. At Shacharis we do not put on the Tallis or Tefillin and Shacharis also is davvened slowly and mournfully. The Sefer Torah is taken out and we read from the Sidra וְאַתְּחַנֵּן that chapter which warns us of the troubles which will befall us if we forsake הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא and His Torah — a warning which we did not heed. After Shacharis, קִינּוֹת are said, followed by the מְגִילַת אֵיכָה (each congregation according to its custom) till about midday
25. Learning Torah is not allowed on Tish'a b'Av since Torah-study is the most sublime and truly noble pleasure that a person can ever experience. However, we are allowed to learn the Gemorrah and Midrashim which deal with the events of Tish'a b'Av, as, too, learning the אֲבִילוֹת of דִּינִים (mourning) is allowed, but one may not delve too deeply into the learning and become engrossed for this affords a gladness of the heart and gives intellectual pleasure.
26. Throughout Tish'a b'Av, washing oneself is not allowed, whether with hot water or cold, and in the morning one may only wipe clean the eyes with one's fingers before drying them after *Negel Wasser*. If any part of the body becomes dirty, one may wash only that part and no more. For אֲשֶׁר יָצַר, too, only the fingers may be washed. Since it is only washing for pleasure that is forbidden, those who prepare food on Tish'a b'Av are permitted to wash the food, even if their hands will inevitably get wet, too.
27. At Mincha we put on the Tallis and Tefillin and we say the שִׁיר שֶׁל יוֹם and some of the other parts of davvening which were left out at שְׁחֵרִית. We read from the Sefer Torah and the Haftarah is said, as on other fast-days, followed by קְדִישׁ. (The Haftarah said in the morning is taken from Yirmiyohu [from Chapter 8, Possuk 13 till Chapter 9, Possuk 23]; that of Mincha is taken from Yeshayohu [from Chapter 55, Possuk 6 till Chapter 56, Possuk 8].)
28. In the שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה of Mincha, we say נַחֵם in the בְּרַכַּת וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם and עֲנֵנוּ in the בְּרַכַּת שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ.
- [a] If one forgot נַחֵם there, one says it instead after עֲנֵנוּ in the בְּרַכַּת שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ.
- [b] If one reminded oneself only after that, one can still insert it, in the בְּרַכַּת רְצֵה just before "וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ".
- But in any such case of not saying נַחֵם in the בְּרַכַּת וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם, one does



## SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דיני "בין המצרים"

not end נַחַם with the words "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מִנַּחֵם צִיּוֹן וּבּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם" but one ends the בְּרָכָה in the usual way, that is, "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה" (or "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַמַּחְזִיר שְׂבִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן").

[c] If one forgot עֲנֵנוּ in שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, one says it at the end of אֵל-לִקְי נִצּוֹר, before וְכוּ' לְרִצּוֹן אֲמָרֵי פִי" וכו'. If one reminded oneself only after that point, the omission cannot be rectified.

29. A person who is not permitted to fast on Tish'a b'Av does say נַחַם but not עֲנֵנוּ.
30. At neither אֵל-אֲרָךְ אַפַּיִם nor at מְנַחֵה of Tish'a b'Av is תַּחֲנוּן said, nor is לְמַנְצָה or לְמַנְצָה said. For even on this, our saddest day, we are mindful of the promise of our Prophets that Tish'a b'Av will one day be changed into a day of Festival and these prayers are not fitting for a day of joy. It is altogether correct that we, the Jewish People, "believers, the children of believers," should always take heart and courage from the words of our Prophets and Rabbis, of blessed memory, and even in great sadness we are not to lose hope and sink into unrelieved depression without any faith in the future. Indeed, we know that in the same way that the calamities they warned us about did in fact come to pass — although they seemed so fantastic at the time — so will their assurances of the great good and true Redemption in the future come about, even though these promises, too, seem so far-fetched.
31. On Tish'a b'Av we do not greet one another nor return a greeting, and even to wish one "Good morning" is forbidden, as is the case with those in mourning. However, if an עַם הָאָרֶץ or a גּוֹי greeted one and he would take offence if the greeting was not returned, then it is permitted to reciprocate in a quiet voice.
32. From the beginning of Tish'a b'Av in the evening until midday of the following day it is forbidden to sit on a chair higher than twelve inches, or thirty centimetres, from the ground and all day it is not allowed to do anything so as to take one's mind off the fast.
33. When Tish'a b'Av falls to be on a Sunday (or it falls to be on Shabbos and the fast is postponed to Sunday) the holiness and serene joy of Shabbos takes precedence over any manifestation of mourning. Meat and wine are allowed all day (even at סְעוּדַת שְׁלִישִׁית) though the overtly joyful gathering of companions is obviously out of place. However, eating and drinking must cease before sun-down, and washing oneself is forbidden from sun-down, too. On the holy Shabbos, obviously, there cannot be any סְעוּדַת הַמַּפְסָקַת as this is the meal of the mourner. Similarly, leather footwear is not removed until after "בְּרַכּוֹ" of מַעֲרִיב. The שְׁלִיחַ צִיּוֹר, however, removes his shoes just before "בְּרַכּוֹ" after saying "בְּרוּךְ הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קוֹדֵשׁ לְחֹל" ("Blessed is He Who separates between the holy and the profane") in an undertone.
34. On the Shabbos morning, אַב הַרְחָמִים (the Memorial Prayer for the Jewish communities massacred during the Crusades and throughout our history) before Mussaf, is said. In the afternoon, פְּרָקֵי אַבוֹת is not learned and at Mincha צְדָקָתְךָ צְדָק is not said.

דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים" — SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS

35. Before Maariv, לְמַנְיַח בְּנִגְיוֹת is not recited (by those congregations that usually recite it) and וַיְהִי נֹעַם is not said in Maariv, nor is וַיִּתֵּן לֶךְ said after Maariv. Havdolloh is not made at the end of Shabbos, but the Brochoh בּוֹרָא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ which is usually recited at Havdolloh, is said after Maariv on seeing a burning candle. אֲתָה חוֹנְנֵתֵנוּ is inserted in the בְּרַכַּת אֲתָה חוֹנֵן in the שְׂמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה as usual on שַׁבַּת קוֹדֵשׁ, but the actual Havdolloh over the cup of wine is not said until Sunday night after the fast ends. (The Brochoh on the spices is not said then, nor is the Brochoh over light said on Sunday night even if one did not say it on שַׁבַּת מוֹצְאֵי שַׁבַּת.)
36. If one forgot אֲתָה חוֹנְנֵתֵנוּ and had ended the Brochoh הַדְּעַת חוֹנֵן, one is not allowed to correct oneself but before doing any weekday activity after Shabbos, one must say, "בְּרוּךְ הַמְּבָדִיל בֵּין קוֹדֵשׁ לְחול". When Tish'a b'Av falls to be on Shabbos, Havdolloh is made on Sunday night and it is forbidden to eat or drink anything after the fast on Sunday night before hearing Havdolloh. (As with all public fast-days, the Fast of Av ends 50 minutes after sun-down, that is, when three medium-size stars become visible. The exact time is shown in the better kind of *Lu'ach*.)
37. When Tish'a b'Av occurs on a Sunday, or it falls on Shabbos and the fast is postponed till Sunday, a person who is not allowed to fast on Tish'a b'Av must make Havdolloh before eating or drinking anything, whether this be on שַׁבַּת מוֹצְאֵי שַׁבַּת or on Sunday.
38. We have learned: On the seventh day of Av the גּוֹיִם broke into the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. For two days they looted and desecrated, in the most vile and debased way, our holiest edifice. Towards the evening of the ninth of Av, they set it alight and the fire raged until the evening of the tenth. Therefore, the דִּינִים of the Nine Days are observed for the first part of the tenth of Av, too. (The ninth of Av is observed as the fast-day because the beginning of the catastrophe is the harder blow.) When Tish'a b'Av falls on Shabbos and the fast is therefore postponed to Sunday, all the restrictions of the Nine Days are lifted when the fast ends on Sunday night except that eating meat and drinking wine are still forbidden until daybreak of the next day (Monday).
39. Tish'a b'Av is not only a national day of mourning for our destroyed Beis HaMikdash. It is also a time for us to reflect on the consequences of that destruction: our own Exile from our Holy Land amongst the nations of the world and our degradation and sufferings at their hands, sometimes more open, sometimes hidden and implied, but always present. The Jewish People, G-d's Chosen People, have had to bear their cruel taunts and physical torments (albeit in some places less violent and blatant than in others) for a long, long time — for well-nigh two thousand years, now. So long, in fact, that it has become a state of affairs that we almost take for granted. It would be quite in order to devote some time on Tish'a b'Av to read-up some of the chronicles of the horrors to which we have been subjected, the better to realize how sad indeed has been our lot since we were driven into Exile so long ago. Whether it be called plain "Jew-hatred," or the nicer-sounding (but no less grievous) "anti-Semitism," it can do no harm for us to be aware of the animosity that is directed against us because of the

SOME DINNIM OF THE THREE WEEKS — דִּינֵי "בֵּין הַמַּצָּרִים"

jealousy of others of our special status as the People which הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא has chosen to be His. We should remind ourselves of how frightfully low we have fallen from our universally acknowledged high place amongst the nations of the world as "the Prince of G-d," sadly brought about by our own attempts to forget our great calling as G-d's message-bearers to the world and by our forsaking הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא and His Torah.

40. But this is not all. The greatest tragedy of all is that by our humiliation, the Name of G-d is dishonoured and disgraced, for we are His People and הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, too, is in Exile with us and, as it were, suffers the shame and humiliation that we, His People, suffers. And yet, throughout this long, long גָּלוּת, we take comfort in the fact that always and ever, "הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא" and His Torah and His People Yisroel are as one," and when we will turn back to Him in sincerity, we will again be seen to be His Chosen People, a Nation that is a model for the whole of Mankind, in our Holy Land and with our holy Beis HaMikdash, as was "in days past." "For HaShem has chosen the people of Yaakov to be His, the people of Yisroel are His special treasure. Indeed, HaShem will never abandon His People, and neither will He forsake His heritage."
41. Every one of us has to consider very seriously that if the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash is delayed in one's own life-time that it is perhaps due to one's actions and thoughts which are displeasing to הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. The purpose of perpetuating the memory of a calamity which occurred long ago is that we resolve to improve ourselves and our standard of observance of the Torah and Mitzvos, the lack of which observance caused the tragedy to happen, and as long as the true Redemption is delayed it is a sign that we have fallen short in our task. No-one is absolved from his or her responsibility to the rest of בְּלֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל. No-one can stand aside and say that his or her actions or efforts are of no significance. But each and every one of us has to examine his or her deeds and practices to see that they be in accordance with the wishes of הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא as He has made them known to us in His Torah.
42. Then will we be deserving to see fulfilled what is written: He who is truly grieved with the rest of the Jewish People when they are in grief, will merit to be consoled together with them when they are comforted by HaShem Himself — בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, אָמֵן .

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ  
וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂתִּמְהַמָּה  
עִם כָּל זֶה אֶחַכֶּה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂיָבוֹא

*I believe with an absolute belief in the coming of the Moshi'ach  
and even if he seems to delay, nevertheless, with all that,  
each and every day I still await his coming.*