

# DAY - TO - DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

## Laws and Customs for Bein Hametzarim 5781

Installment III

Friday, 29th of Tammuz - the 5th of Av 5781

### LAWS OF THE NINE DAYS

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#### FRIDAY, PARSHAS MATOS-MAASEI, THE 29TH OF TAMMUZ, EREV ROSH CHODESH AV

Say *shnayim mikra* today for the weekly *parshah* of *Matos-Maasei*.

When reading *shnayim mikra*, it is our custom to recite all of the *Haftoros*. Specifically, as is the *minhag* of our Rebbeim, on this *erev Shabbos*, recite the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Maasei* (starting with *Shim'u*). On *Shabbos* morning, we do this again from the seventh *aliya* until the end of the *parshah*, accompanied with the *haftorah* of *Shabbos Rosh Chodesh*.

It is recommended that all laundered clothing you intend to wear throughout the Nine Days should be worn for a short amount of time today (as long as it takes for the freshly-laundered feeling to recede). We are restricted from wearing newly-washed clothes during the Nine Days because of the pleasure derived from the experience (this restriction does not apply to under-clothing).

Light candles at **8:10 pm** (18 minutes before sunset).

#### THE NINE DAYS

At a *farbrengen* just before Rosh Chodesh (and the Nine Days), the Rebbe says<sup>1</sup>: “To hold a *farbrengen* in the Three Weeks seems rather unconventional<sup>2</sup> and I therefore made a special effort to find a halachic leniency. The best source I found was the law that permits (a professional musician) who needs to make a living to play instruments in the Three Weeks. Now, since this is my livelihood, I also have no choice but to *farbreng*, even in the Three Weeks. And while the above leniency precludes dancing, we can still be joyful and sing *niggunim* because, as mentioned, many *poskim*—Rishonim and Acharonim—explicitly allow for it.”

“Although the Gemara instructs us,” the Rebbe explains<sup>3</sup> “To

\*) The basic laws and customs presented below are derived from multiple sources. Due to a dearth of space only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively.

Halachos compiled by Rabbi **M. M. Rotenberg**.

1) From a *sichah* on *erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av*, 5735.

2) A “*chiddush*”

3) From a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* 5716 (part of the talk is edited and printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, pg. 194ff.)

reduce joyfulness in Av, we nevertheless find this ‘reduction’ to be limited. We don’t reduce **all** joy. Even the month of Av has joyful elements, because joy needs to be constant, as the Torah tells us: ‘Serve Hashem with joy,’ constantly; even in Av.”

#### An Unhappy Second

The Rebbe further encourages us: The *possuk* says that Hashem has “strength and joy in His place.” In other words, wherever Hashem is, you’ll find joy. It follows, then, that to make a ‘dwelling place for Hashem (down below), we must have “strength and joy”—because only when there is both, is it “His place”. So, even during times when we are told to “reduce joy”, we must still maintain a certain sense of joy.

Why? Since the task of making a home for Hashem applies at all times, as it is the very purpose of our creation (as the Mishnah states, “I was *only* created to serve my Creator”), therefore, we have the constant obligation to fill every single moment of our lives with joy.

Yes, sometimes we must take a different approach, one which contrasts joy ... This is the *avodah* of the month of Av, to “reduce joy”, so as to remove the negativity which sent us into *golus*. But this “reduction” is secondary in our service of Hashem. So the reduction of joy remains extremely limited, for two reasons: Firstly, because in addition to it—and simultaneously—we must have the aspect of joy, and as mentioned, it must be constant, and also, the opposite of joy is not an essential aspect of our *avodah*.

#### Then, A Pinch

“Some very ‘stringent’ people,” the Rebbe tells<sup>4</sup>, “take issue with the fact that I am appealing (during this time of year) for joy, because doesn’t it say ‘When Av arrives we reduce our joy?’ So firstly, there are twenty-four, or even thirty-six hours left until the month of Av begins. Moreover, even during the month of Av, the directive is to **reduce** joy—which means to have less joy than in the month of Adar or less than we will have when Moshiach comes—but still, there must be joy!

“How much ‘reduction’ is necessary? We can derive a formula from here: The [Friediker] Rebbe once related, that those who struggle to serve Hashem with joy fulfil their obligation to celebrate Simchas Torah by drinking milk (because, halachically, it can be intoxicating) and by pinching their cheeks so it appears that they are laughing.

4) From a *sichah* on *Shabbos Parshas Matos Masei*, 5713. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pg. 354.

“Now, since the measure of positivity is always greater (than the negative), the requisite ‘reduction’ in joy should be a pinch on the other cheek!”

### Torah & Tzedakah

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe quotes the well-known saying which reinterprets the “reduction of joy” during Av—namely, that we “reduce” the negativity of the Nine Days through an **increase** of joy!

Obviously, this refers to joy that is allowed according to halachah. In the Nine Days, this can be achieved through Torah and mitzvos—as it says in Tehillim,<sup>5</sup> “Hashem’s Orders are just, they cause the heart to rejoice”—and this includes, especially, *tzedakah*, the giving of which brings joy to a pauper in the most literal sense. Another avenue of permissible joy can be achieved by making public *siyumim*, on every day of the Nine Days, in every possible location. This joy is generated down here, to the participant in this world, and consequently, brings joy on High.

This is the the reason Chassidim aren’t “scrupulous” in the performance of the adage to reduce joy, because this temporary decrease in joy only comes second to actual *avodah*.

The halachic restrictions of the Nine Days begin from the eve of Rosh Chodesh Av. They are in effect starting from *shkiah* (sunset), as is the custom, and lasting until *chatzos* (midday) of the tenth of Av. Within the Nine Days, there is a period of stricter mourning that applies within the week of *Tishah B’Av* itself, as will be outlined below. (However, since this year *Tishah B’Av* falls on Sunday, these restrictions are relevant only to *Tishah B’Av* itself.)

A Jew who has an upcoming court case with a non-Jew should endeavor to push it off until Rosh Chodesh Elul, or at least until after *Tishah B’Av*, for during this time-period our *mazel* is weak. It is customary to wait until after *Tishah B’Av* to recite *Kiddush Levanah*.

## BUSINESS MATTERS & SHOPPING

We are more lenient with regard to conducting business during this period than in previous eras, for usually what is earned nowadays is needed directly to support our families.

It is forbidden to purchase silverware and other expensive household appliances,<sup>6</sup> or nice furniture, during the Nine Days. Basic flatware, dishes and other necessities are permitted, though the purchase of non-urgent items should wait until after *Tishah B’Av*. Comparison shopping (without actually purchasing anything) is also permitted. Window shopping for pleasure should be avoided.

If someone purchased a new piece of furniture prior to Rosh Chodesh Av that arrived during the Nine Days, they should not bring it into the house, or at least shouldn’t use it until after *chatzos* on the tenth of Av.

New clothing and shoe purchases are not permitted during the Nine Days. This restriction applies also if they aren’t significant items, and even if not buying it will be at a financial loss (such as in the case where an item is on sale<sup>7</sup>), and the intention is to

5) 19:9

6) The same restriction applies to a car, washing machine/dryer or the like, if its purchase is not an immediate, pressing need. Purchasing business-related items of this caliber (like a car, for commuting), is within the halachic category of limitations on general business transactions, for which, as mentioned in the halachos, we are lenient.

7) In a case where the sale will end before *Tishah B’Av*, this particular piece of apparel will need to be purchased regardless, and it is not yet the actual week of

wear the new item only after *Tishah B’Av*.

**Mitzvah Articles:** It is permitted to purchase new Tefillin during the Nine Days as they are only used for a mitzvah. It is forbidden, however, to purchase a Tallis or Tzitzis<sup>8</sup> since, despite being designated only for a mitzvah, they are considered clothing.

**Tishah B’Av Shoes:** Purchase non-leather shoes to wear on *Tishah B’Av* if you do not have them yet. You may even wear them for the first time on *Tishah B’Av* itself.

## Construction & Gardening

From Rosh Chodesh Av on, we limit construction that engenders joy, like those in the category of home decoration. This includes any renovations that are not needed to make a home livable; restrictions include extensions, additions, and home improvements. Likewise, we do not paint our homes, put up new wallpaper, or purchase or install new carpeting.

Some have the tradition of not washing the floors during the Nine Days, though it is permitted even during the week of *Tishah B’Av* itself, from a strict halachic perspective. If grime and dirt have accumulated, there is no custom to be stringent. However, we do not shine floors as it is only for pleasure and not out of necessity, similar to cosmetic renovations.

Building restrictions apply even with non-Jewish contractors and workers. However, if you contracted the work prior to Rosh Chodesh with an open date for completion after the Nine Days, the non-Jew may work during this time, even on *Tishah B’Av* itself, for they are working at that time for their own benefit.

If someone has a contract with a non-Jew to paint (or otherwise beautify) their home, this is permitted (for the reason mentioned above). Nevertheless, it is praiseworthy, though not required, to try to offer a small compensation for the worker to wait to complete the work after *Tishah B’Av*.

A Jew whose livelihood is in construction is permitted to construct and renovate the home of a non-Jew during the Nine Days.

A shul or beis medrash may be constructed or renovated during the Nine Days without restriction. Similarly, you may construct a *maakeh* (a fence for a roof, which is a Biblical mitzvah) during this time, even on *Tishah B’Av* itself.

A crumbling wall that might collapse may be repaired even if it poses no actual danger, and fixing it immediately is only to prevent a more costly repair down the line. Even though this is construction that causes gratification, and not strictly out of necessity, it is permitted, because the main intention is to prevent monetary loss.

During the Nine Days, it is forbidden to plant trees for shade and beauty, or any type of flower or fragrant bush. Watering existing plants is permitted.

It is permitted to purchase flowers for Shabbos, especially if this is a weekly habit.

*Tishah B’Av*, the item may be purchased—especially if it will not be available at all at a later time. But it should not be worn until after the Nine Days, and if possible, should be paid for before Rosh Chodesh.

8) It is permitted to purchase a new yarmulka and Tzitzis for an *upshernish* boy who turns three during the Nine Days (as mentioned earlier, all traditions associated with turning three apply on his birthday, aside from the haircut itself). However, if possible, it is proper to purchase earlier and get him accustomed to wearing the Tzitzis before Rosh Chodesh.

## CELEBRATIONS

It is permitted to get engaged and have a L'chaim during the Nine Days, but not to make a celebratory *seudah* (even on Shabbos)<sup>9</sup>. Only refreshments should be served.

Someone who has experienced a miracle should host a *seudas hodaah* (meal of thanks to Hashem) on the anniversary of the day, to contemplate and share their rescue story. If the day of the miracle occurred during the Nine Days, it is still a time to recall it and feel gratitude to Hashem, but the *seudah* and celebration should be postponed until *Shabbos Nachamu* or the fifteenth of Av.

During the Three Weeks it is the custom not to host a *chanukas habayis* (housewarming), since it is not an auspicious time. However, during the Nine Days it is halachically forbidden, even if there is no meat on the menu, as such a gathering is included within the restriction of decreased joy.

## LAUNDRY

Doing laundry is forbidden during the Nine Days.<sup>10</sup> This also applies to clothing that you don't plan on wearing until after *Tishah B'Av*. Laundering is not permitted even if you are traveling immediately after the fast.

We also do not bring clothing to the dry cleaners, despite the fact that the cleaning process is chemical and not water-based. Bed Linens, even handkerchiefs and tablecloths, are included in the prohibition against laundering.

A Jew may not launder the clothing of a non-Jew within a stricter period in the Nine Days, which is the week of *Tishah B'av*. (This year, this restriction only applies only to Sunday, the ninth of Av.)

You may not give your clothing to a non-Jewish launderer from Rosh Chodesh and on. However, if it was handed in before Rosh Chodesh, you are not required to warn against washing them during the Nine Days. If you do not have a clean shirt for Shabbos, a non-Jew may wash it for you during the Nine Days.<sup>11</sup>

It is forbidden to wash a wig during the Nine Days. If there is a real need, there is room for leniency, (except on *Tishah B'av* itself). It is permitted to style and comb—even with the assistance of hair products—and trim a wig (especially for *tznius* reasons).

Adults are prohibited from laundering children's clothing. However, you may launder the clothing of young children<sup>12</sup> who are constantly getting dirty. Do so discreetly and restrain from adding any other clothing to the wash. If possible, have a minor child (or a non-Jew) wash the soiled clothing.

This leniency only applies to situations when the clothing is needed for the moment. However, we may not launder clothing that will be put aside for later.

9) It appears that it is likewise forbidden to make any other social party-*seudah* during the Nine Days.

10) There is room for leniency when it comes to preventing permanent damage to the item of clothing, like if it will become moldy, because washing them, in this instance, isn't detracting from properly mourning the Beis Hamikdash.

11) Nevertheless, it is better to be careful not to do this in the home of a Jew, to prevent *maris ayin*.

12) The definition of "young child" in this context: We customarily practice these leniencies up until the age of chinuch, which is six years old. If an item is extremely dirty, you can rely on the opinions that are more lenient with children until the age of Bar Mitzvah.

Ironing is likewise forbidden, whether garments are for immediate use or to put away for a later time.

## WEARING LAUNDERED CLOTHES

We are prohibited from wearing freshly laundered or ironed clothing during the Nine Days, even if they were laundered before Rosh Chodesh. This also applies to bedding<sup>13</sup>, handkerchiefs, tablecloths and the like.<sup>14</sup>

If the clothing was worn even once before Rosh Chodesh, they are permitted to be worn during the Nine Days themselves.

We are customarily more lenient with laundered underclothes and socks and can exchange them when necessary during the Nine Days. This is especially nowadays, when everyone is particular about these things.

If someone runs out of unsoiled clothing, they may wash them up to the week of *Tishah B'Av*. (Since *Tishah B'Av* falls on Sunday this year, we are proscribed from washing, in these circumstances, only on the fast itself.)

Children whose clothing requires washing during the Nine Days (see above) are permitted to wear freshly laundered clothing.

Freshly laundered clothing for Shabbos are permitted, like any other Shabbos (but no new clothing). Likewise, a clean tablecloth may be spread. But bed linens may not be changed until after *Tisha B'Av*.

**Shabbos Clothing:** It is forbidden to wear Shabbos clothing during the Nine Days<sup>15</sup>. At a *bris*, it is customary that the *mohel*, the *sandek*, the woman who brings in the baby<sup>16</sup>, the parents, grandparents, and other relatives wear Shabbos clothing (if they would wear them at another time for this relative). Likewise, at a *pidyon haben*—the parents and the *kohen* wear Shabbos clothing. Halachically, at a *seudah* that takes place on the thirteenth birthday itself, only the bar mitzvah boy and his parents wear Shabbos clothing.

## MEAT & WINE

It is customary not to eat meat or drink wine from Rosh Chodesh until the fast, including Rosh Chodesh itself.<sup>17</sup> Even though this is not a halachic prohibition (to the point that,

13) In the case of a guest, it is permitted to make a bed with fresh sheets, as no guest is comfortable using linen that someone else has slept in. Towels at the mikvah, likewise.

14) For medical reasons, such as to prevent an infection, or if not changing the sheets would cause skin irritation, and likewise in hospitals, it is permitted.

15) For shidduch dating, if you have no other nice clothing available, you can be lenient and wear Shabbos clothing.

16) But the man who brings the baby in and out [called a *kvatter*] and other *mechubadim* (honorees) are not included in this category.

17) A sick person (even someone mildly ill, unless it is assured that a dairy diet will do no harm), also someone who is lactose intolerant, pregnant, or nursing a weak child (whose health would be compromised if the mother didn't eat meat), is permitted to eat chicken. If there is no chicken, they may eat meat. Today, when there are many meatless but healthy alternatives, it is preferable to avoid chicken or meat, unless doing so would compromise health. Additionally, by listening in to a *siyum*, they are able to eat meat.

A woman who is within thirty days of giving birth may eat meat and drink wine, if needed. A woman who does so in these circumstances, should best to avoid doing so from the seventh to the ninth of Av, but not if there are health concerns.

Someone who made a *bracha* on meat or wine by mistake should eat just a small quantity quickly so that it doesn't become a blessing in vain. This tiny bit does not qualify to add enjoyment during the Nine Days, nor is it considered to have broken the custom of avoiding these foods.

strictly speaking, meat and wine are not proscribed even the day before the fast, except for *seuda hamafsekes*), it is said that about someone who eats meat and drinks wine where the prevailing custom is not to, is opening themselves up to negative ramifications (as the *possuk* says, “one who breaks boundaries, snakes will bite him”).

The prohibition to eat meat includes also chicken, cured meats and all dishes cooked with meat.<sup>18</sup> You may cook pareve food in a *fleishig* pot, even if the pot was used for meat within the last twenty-four hours. You may also eat soup that contains onions cut with a *fleishig* knife.

Children under six years old may eat meat during the Nine Days. The prohibition of drinking wine includes grape juice<sup>19</sup> and foods cooked with wine. Wine vinegar is permitted. Beer is also permitted, as are all other alcoholic beverages (besides wine).

We are customarily stringent not to drink the wine for *bentching* on a weekday. Instead, the wine is given to a young child who is capable of making a *brachah*, but has not yet reached the age of following the laws of mourning during the Nine Days. The child should drink a full mouthful. If there is no child present, do not *bentch* over wine. If someone has already *bentched* over a cup of wine, and there is no child present, he should place the cup aside and not drink from it.

Concerning the wine for *havdalah*, see further, in the *halachos* of *motzoei* Shabbos.

You are allowed to eat meat and drink wine (including the cup of wine from *bentching*) at a *seudas mitzvah*, like a *bris* (even if it's not on time),<sup>20</sup> *pidyon haben*, *seudas* Bar Mitzvah (that takes place on the actual birthday of the Bar Mitzvah boy), and at a *siyum* of a *mesechta*.<sup>21</sup> This applies only to those who are associated with the event, meaning those who would have attended, as a relative or friend,<sup>22</sup> had the event taken place at a different time of the year. This includes also the women who participate for these reasons, if it is the norm for women to attend. But someone who wants to partake of the food of the *seudas mitzvah* at home, may not have wine or meat.<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that there are those who do not serve meat or drink wine even at a *seudas mitzvah* during the Nine Days at all, so that the entire population can partake.

**Shechitah:** According to the Ramah, the slaughtering knife is put away on Rosh Chodesh Av, as *shechting* is only performed during the Nine Days when it is necessary for a mitzvah, such as for a sick person, Shabbos or *milah* (or *pidyon haben*). However,

18) If meat mistakenly falls into a cooked dish, it does not invalidate the rest of the food if it is 1/60 or less of the full volume.

19) If needed for medical reasons, you can be lenient and drink wine or grape juice mixed with enough water that the taste of the wine is extremely diluted (and halachically, the *bracha* of *Hagafen* cannot be said on the drink).

20) The cup of wine of the *brochos* from the *bris* are given to a child to drink, since this is before the *seudah* commences. If there is no child, the one who made the *brachah* drinks it himself, and it is not given to the baby who has just had the *bris*. However, participant of the *seudas mitzvah* may partake from the wine of *bentching*.

21) See below for the details of the laws and customs regarding *siyumei masechtos*.

22) However, those who go just to drink, and wouldn't have necessarily gone to the meal otherwise, should not partake, as this falls under the category of a mitzvah that results from an *aveirah*.

23) Within the week of *Tisha B'Av* itself, only a limited *minyan* of men besides the *baalei hasimcha* and close relatives (only those close enough to be invalidated as kosher witnesses) may eat meat and drink wine). Since *Tisha B'Av* is on Sunday, this halachah does not apply this year.

nowadays, when the majority of Jews live in big cities, which always have people of poor health and women who recently gave birth, and we also need meat to be available for Shabbos, it is no longer customary to put away the knife.

## NAIL CUTTING

It is permitted to cut your nails during the Nine Days, except during the week of *Tisha b'Av* itself. (This year that is only on the fast, since it falls on Sunday).<sup>24</sup>

## SHOWERING/BATHING

It is forbidden to wash your entire body for pleasure, even with cold water, during the Nine Days. However, you may wash your hands, feet and face and shower with the following requirements: the water cannot be hot; the showering cannot be for pleasure; and you cannot wash more than half of your body.<sup>25</sup>

If the above protocol is not enough to remove dirt and sweat, it's permissible to wash the entire body, one part at a time. If lukewarm water doesn't do the job, it is permissible to use hot water and even soap, to the extent necessary. You should shower discreetly, and not at the public *mikvah*, or the like.

Similarly, swimming in a pool or in the sea is not permitted.<sup>26</sup>

It is permitted to wash, even in hot water, if needed for health, such as a sick person, pregnant woman or a woman who has just given birth.

A man who goes to the *mikvah* regularly before davening is permitted to go during the Nine Days.

For a mitzvah,<sup>27</sup> you should wash yourself as normal (with hot water and with soap).<sup>28</sup>

## SEWING

We may not sew or alter new clothing, or cobble shoes, in the Nine Days. Although, by the strict definition of halachah, working on old clothing is not proscribed, since it is customary to avoid laundering clothing, this extends to mending them as well. All this only applies to complete alterations, but it is permitted to mend old clothing with small repairs that don't require a professional tailor.

24) For a woman going to the *mikvah* on *motzoei Tishah B'Av*, or if someone suspects that his nails might be a *chatzitza* for *netilas yadayim*, nail cutting is permitted even during the week of the fast itself.

25) Water sprinklers may be used to cool off in the Nine Days in this manner.

26) You can be lenient, if necessary, with children under six years old. However, precautions should be taken because this is a time of *sakanah*, as stated earlier in the *halachos* of the Three Weeks. Someone who is learning to swim for purposes related to earning a living, and began lessons before the Nine Days but has not completed the course, may go swimming in a lake even after Rosh Chodesh, since this is career-oriented and not for pleasure. Nevertheless, in both these circumstances, it is certainly best to be stringent.

27) This applies to a woman who needs to use the *mikvah*—she prepares herself as normal with hot water and then immerses. Even if she is visiting the *mikvah* on *motzoei Tisha B'Av*, she may still wash herself on *erev Tisha B'Av*, and then complete her preparations after the fast is over. (This year, this preparatory time coincides with *erev Shabbos*, when bathing is allowed for Shabbos, regardless.)

From the time she finishes bathing, she should be careful of *chatzitzah*—like not walking barefoot so that dirt and other substances don't stick to her soles.

The limitations on bathing are also suspended if she must make a *hefsek taharah* during the Nine Days; she may wash the prescribed areas as normal.

28) See also later in the section “*erev Shabbos Chazon*” concerning bathing for Shabbos

Sewing wedding clothes for a wedding, where the groom has no children from a previous marriage<sup>29</sup> is permitted during the Nine Days. On *Tishah B'Av* itself, as well, if the tailor is not Jewish.

A Jewish tailor or cobbler may not create new apparel for others, whether commissioned or free. Even if the work is for a non-Jew, it is forbidden (because of how it appears to the common observer), unless it's public knowledge that the work is for non-Jews. If the Jew needs the work to pay for basic necessities such as food, he is permitted even if it's not public knowledge that it's for a non-Jew. There are leniencies that may be applied in this case, even for a Jew, if the work was commissioned before Rosh Chodesh.

There are leniencies for alterations commissioned via a non-Jewish tailor, if the clothing was handed in before Rosh Chodesh and ordered to be ready for after the fast. But it is best to avoid this situation when possible.

**Weaving:** Traditionally, women avoid warping their looms (tying the foundational threads) on account of mourning at this time when the *Even Hashetsiya* (the Foundation Stone of the world, which lived in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash*) was nullified.<sup>30</sup> Other similar practices in cloth-making are also restricted, such as knitting and crocheting. Spinning thread is permitted as it isn't related to weaving. Weaving with twigs (or lanyard) are also allowed, because they are not related to clothing fabrication at all.

## SIYUMIM

The Rebbe says<sup>31</sup>: Please publicize everywhere possible and inspire others about the *minhag* of having *siyumim* on each of the Nine Days<sup>32</sup> in order to add in the joy of Torah in a permissible manner. In this way, we will nullify those matters that are contrary to joy.

Since the effects of the ninth of Av last until the fifteenth of Av, it is suggested that, should Moshiach be, G-d forbid, delayed, the *siyumim* should continue during the remaining days until, and including, the fifteenth of Av.

"Through arranging a 'completion' (*siyum*) in Torah," the Rebbe explains<sup>33</sup>, "we cause a 'completion' within all other matters in the world, including and most importantly, the completion of Exile. In fact, the appropriate term truly is the *completion* of Exile and not its nullification, for we are referring to the [positive] conclusion and completeness of the Exile itself, which is wrought by drawing the א (Alef) [i.e. Hashem, the Master (*Aluf*) of the Universe] into the Exile. We thus transform Exile (*Golah*—גולה) into Redemption (*Geulah*—גאולה)."

We should expend effort to ensure that the *siyumim* will draw a great attendance. Both men and women should attend these *siyumim*—seated separately, of course—as well as children.

Customarily, everyone gathers around the person conducting the *siyum* before he has recited the *siyum* of the *mesechta*, and he completes it in their presence. Everyone listens and joins in

29) In halachic sources, (and at times and in places where polygamy is legal) this dispensation also does not apply to marriages where the groom has children from his other wife.

30) Girls learning to sew, weave, knit, or crochet should not continue their lessons during the Nine Days. Summer camps should also restrict these activities. An ill woman who embroiders (or needlepoints, or similar) to calm her nerves, may do so even during the Nine Days.

31) *Sichas Parshas Devarim*, 5751. In *Hisvaduyos* p.96

32) "And also regarding the *siyum* of the Rambam that will take place during this time this year (in 5751)"

33) *Sichas 5 Menachem-Av*, 5748. In *Hisvaduyos* p.108

his *siyum*, and then has a *seudah*.

The *siyum* should be associated with the giving of *tzedakah*. On Shabbos, "give" spiritual *tzedakah*, and then after Shabbos, give physical *tzedakah* as well.

It is good to combine the *siyum* (where appropriate) with a *seudah* and *farbrengen*. The Rebbe Rashab had the *minhag* to "make *siyumim*" during the Nine Days, despite the fact that he wouldn't have a *seudah* afterward with meat and wine.

It is permitted to eat meat and drink wine at the *seudah* of a *siyum*, if the attendees would have taken part out of friendship, had this *siyum* taken place any other time.<sup>34</sup>

There are those who practice, as did the Rebbe Rashab, not to eat meat or drink wine during the Nine Days, even when participating in a *siyum*. This is to preclude the need to decide from among the various and conflicting halachic opinions regarding these particular type of *siyumim*, and whether they qualify for a *seudas mitzvah* with wine and meat that override the mourning practices of the Nine Days. Among these questions are: Does the allowance apply to a *siyum* that is being made especially for the Nine Days, and if not for the desire for a dining dispensation would have been held earlier or later? Who can enjoy this meal? Anyone who participates in the *siyum*, or only those who would show up for this learner's *siyum* on any other day of the year? What is the normal practice of the *siyum*-maker—does he generally have a meal following completion of a *mesechta*? Is it enough if it is usually a light meal, or does he specifically have to have a tradition of serving wine and meat? What if the person has no history to bank on, since he only makes *siyumim* during the Nine Days altogether? While the halachic consensus is that meat and wine are allowed in most circumstances, many choose to serve only fish and beverages other than wine at these events.

According to the letter of the law, joining a *siyum* via radio, telephone, or other virtual means, is considered taking part, even for the intent of being able to eat meat and drinking wine, if this participant would have joined during another time out of friendship to the person making the *siyum*. However, it is preferable to join in person.

If someone completed a *mesechta* from beginning to end, previously, but hasn't yet conducted a *siyum* (with the associated practices, including recitation of "*Hadran...*"), it is proper to make a celebration, but this is not considered an actual *siyum* and eating meat and drinking wine are not permitted.

A *siyum* on a *mesechta* of Mishnayos (preferably learned with at least one commentary, such as the Bartenura) qualifies as a celebration worthy of serving meat at the accompanying meal. Nevertheless, it is better to conduct the *siyum* on a *mesechta* (and not just a perek) of Gemara, so that the *siyum* satisfies all halachic criteria.

Someone who took part in a Gemara shiur, and completed an entire *mesechta*, may conduct a *siyum*, even though he has not learned the *mesechta* inside. This is because the main point of

34) See above in the section of *halachos* of eating meat and drinking wine. In the week of *Tishah B'Av* itself, it is permissible to eat meat only with a *minyana* of men besides relatives who are related closely enough to be invalidated as kosher witnesses. This latter caveat does not apply this year, as *Tishah B'Av* falls on Sunday.

studying the Oral Torah is comprehension, and not the wording. Our custom is that following a *siyum* we say *kaddish d'rabanan* and not the *kaddish* that is printed at the end of a *mesechta*.

If someone walks into a *seudah* that followed a *siyum*, is he considered a participant regarding eating meat and drinking wine? Or, the opposite, if someone listened in on the *siyum* but did not partake in the *seudah*, may he eat meat later at home? In practice, we can be lenient in pressing circumstances in these in these matters during the Nine Days,<sup>35</sup> and even having partaken of only one aspect suffices.

## FRIDAY NIGHT, PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI, ROSH CHODESH AV

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of Aharon Hakohen.<sup>36</sup>

### The Moon Grows

"In some respects, Rosh Chodesh is considered a Yom Tov," the Rebbe says<sup>37</sup>, "as it is the greatest and most special day of the month. In addition, Rosh Chodesh is the root and source, and therefore contains, all the days of the month.

"Regarding Rosh Chodesh Av, there is extra special significance to the 'Yom Tov' as this fifth month includes the 'fifth fast day' (of the ones associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*) that is destined to be transformed into a day of happiness, joy, and a Yom Tov, as will all the fast days. And since this fast represents the greatest descent, it's self-understood that, after the transformation, it will represent the greatest ascent—it will be the greatest Yom Tov of them all.

"Moreover, the month of Av includes the advantage of the fifteenth of Av, a day that the Gemara calls the greatest of all Yomim Tovim. And because the greatness of the fifteenth of Av stems from it being the day that the moon shines to its fullest, this advantage already begins from Rosh Chodesh, the day of the *molad* (the birth of this month's moon). In other words, the start of the moon's ultimate perfection is from the moment it begins to wax, on Rosh Chodesh. So the advantage of the fifteenth of Av as the greatest Yom Tov can already be felt on Rosh Chodesh Av."

### Hallel, How?

On a Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Av, the Rebbe says<sup>38</sup>: [Today], Rosh Chodesh Av, we say Hallel. Hallel is connected with the concept of revelation, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Likkutei Torah*<sup>39</sup>. The word Hallel is etymologically related to the possuk from *Iyov*, "B'hilo neuro —(Hashem) lit His candle", the concept of 'light', revelation. Now, seemingly, the revelation of Hashem's light and the events of the month of Av contradict each other. Nevertheless, we do say Hallel on this Rosh Chodesh, same as on every other one, to bring these two opposing ideas together. We can transform the darkness of the negative aspects of this month themselves to become light and revelation. We know this from the possuk in *Koheles*<sup>40</sup>, "Wisdom is greater than foolishness, just like light is greater than darkness."—and an alternate reading is: "the light that emerges from within the darkness is greater..." This transformation is possible on the level, as it says in *Tehillim*<sup>41</sup>, "Night will be lit up like the day", and all darkness, golus, and negativity will be gone forever.

More on this vein, from 5741: Rosh Chodesh comes with lots of joy, for it is a day on which we recite Hallel. Hallel is recited only on a

day of great happiness, a special time of celebration, as we can see from the Gemara concerning the ill-advised conduct of a person who says it every day—the daily grind is not Hallel-worthy.

However, when such an opportunity of joy does arise, and we fail to say Hallel, that too is inappropriate. As the Gemara also says regarding King Chizkiyahu, who was punished because he did not properly praise Hashem for the miracles wrought to him. The same applies to today, Rosh Chodesh Av. Not only is Rosh Chodesh not a regular workday, it is a day we say Hallel, a special time of joy!

This is actually a novel idea, surprising, that we find ourselves in the time of *Bein Hameitzarim*, and on the first of the (even more difficult) Nine Days, and nevertheless, we say Hallel, an act of celebration and joy!

*Kabbalas Shabbos* is recited as usual. *Ya'aleh veyavo* is added during *Maariv*. If you forgot *ya'aleh veyavo* tonight, do not repeat the *Amidah*.

During *Birchas Hamazon*, first recite *Retzei* for Shabbos and then *ya'aleh veyavo* for Rosh Chodesh.

If you forgot to recite *ya'aleh veyavo*, or made another mistake associated with *Retzei* and *ya'aleh veyavo*, see footnote.<sup>42</sup>

## SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI, SHABBOS CHAZAK, ROSH CHODESH AV

Add *ya'aleh veyavo* in *Shacharis*. If you forgot to recite *ya'aleh*

42) Shabbos Rosh Chodesh *bentching* errors:

### Out of Order

If you first recited *ya'aleh veyavo* and only then recited *Retzei*, you have fulfilled your obligation. However, if you remembered *Retzei* in the middle of *ya'aleh veyavo* before reciting the words "*b'yom rosh hachodesh*", stop immediately and say *Retzei* at that point and continue with *ya'aleh veyavo*, from the start.

If you forgot *Retzei*, the law is identical to any other Shabbos of the year.

### Remembered...when?

If you forgot to say *ya'aleh veyavo*, but remembered before you said Hashem's name at the end of the brachah of "*boneh b'rachamov Yerushalayim*", go back and say it then. If you had already said Hashem's name, finish off the brachah, and then say (according to the *nusach* in the *siddur*) "*Baruch...shenosan roshei chadoshim l'amo Yisrael l'zikaron*." (Do not conclude with "*Baruch...mekadesh Yisrael v'Roshei Chadoshim*").

However, if you remembered after you already started the brachah of "*hatov v'hameitiv*", even if all you already said was the word "*baruch*", do not go back and say *ya'aleh veyavo*. (You will mention Rosh Chodesh with the *Harachaman*.)

If you mistakenly thought that you are halachically required to *bentch* again if you omitted *ya'aleh veyavo* on Rosh Chodesh, and then remembered while you were in the middle of *bentching* the second time that you aren't actually supposed to, you should stop *bentching* there and then—even in the middle of a paragraph.

If you said *ya'aleh veyavo* and then mistakenly continued with "*V'sechezna einenu*" (which follows *ya'aleh veyavo* in *Shacharis*), stop and go back and say "*Uvnei Yerushalayim*" from *bentching*. If you realized after saying Hashem's name at the conclusion of the brachah, but hadn't yet said the words "*hamachazir Shchinaso*", finish off the brachah with the words "*lamdeni chukecha*" (from *Tehillim*), and then go back and continue from "*Uvnei Yerushalayim*". If, instead of saying "*lamdeni chukecha*", you concluded the brachah with "*boneh b'rachamov Yerushalayim*" (from *bentching*), you are *yotzei*. And if you already finished off the entire brachah of "*hamachazir Shchinaso*" (from *davening*), go back to where he had been up to in *bentching* ("*Uvnei Yerushalayim*").

### Not Two

If *both* *retzei* and *ya'aleh veyavo* were omitted, and you remembered the omission before reciting the brachah of "*hatov v'hameitiv*" but after saying Hashem's name in the blessing of "*boneh Yerushalayim*," (conclude the brachah of "*boneh Yerushalayim*" first if in middle and) recite: "*Baruch...shenassan Shabbasos lemenuchah l'amo Yisrael b'ahavah...v'Rashei Chadoshim...baruch ...mekadesh hashabbos v'Yisrael v'rashei chadoshim*."

However if this is during the Shabbos afternoon meal, and the sun has already set, say instead: "*Baruch...shenosan Shabbasos l'menucha l'amo Yisrael b'ahavah l'os v'lebris v'Roshei Chadoshim l'amo Yisrael l'zikaron*" (and do not conclude with "*Baruch Ata Hashem, mekadesh Hashabbos Yisrael v'Roshei Chadoshim*").

35) Not so on *erev Pesach*. A firstborn must participate in the *siyum* in order to have dispensation to break his fast.

36) As described in this week's *parshah*, *Bamidbar* 33:38

37) From a *sichah* on Rosh Chodesh *Menachem Av*, 5749

38) From a *sichah* of Shabbos *Parshas Matos-Maasei* 5737

39) *Parshas Tzav* 14:4.

40) 2:13

41) 139:12

veyavo, see footnote.<sup>43</sup>

During Shacharis, half-Hallel is followed by *V'Avraham zaken, Kaddish tiskabel, Shir shel Yom* (Mizmor shir l'yom hashabbos), *Hoshi'einu, Barchi nafshi*, and *Kaddish Yasom*. Then *Ata horeisa* is said, and *Krias Hatorah* begins.

Two *sifrei Torah* are used today. *Parshas Matos-Maasei* is read from the first (in seven *aliyos*), after which the second *sefer Torah* is placed on the *bimah* alongside the first. We may not remove the first *sefer Torah* until the second *sefer Torah* is placed on the *bimah* (so that the *bimah* should not be vacant from a mitzvah). Half-*Kaddish* is recited and *hagbah* (lifting the Torah) and *gelilah* (wrapping the Torah) are performed on the first Torah. Only once it is complete, is the second Torah uncovered and unrolled, and *Maftir* is read from it. It is the reading for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh (*Uv'yom hashabbos ...u'verashei chadsheichem*). The second Torah is then raised and wrapped.

During today's Torah reading, at the end of the seventh *aliyah*, it is customary to rise for the reading of the final verse in the book of Bamidbar, after which the entire congregation (men, women, and children) calls out loudly and joyfully—"Chazak, chazak, venischazeik!" This shout symbolizes the strength of the Jewish people in all matters of Torah—with the additional benediction of a *chazakah* (a halachic status where a particular action performed thrice becomes a tendency.).

The one who is called to the Torah for the seventh *aliyah* should join the rest of the congregation in proclaiming "Chazak!". This is not considered an interruption in the reading, because it is considered part of the final verse's reading process.

**The Haftorah:** Chabad custom is to recite the *Haftorah* of *Shimu* like every year (the second of the three Haftoros recited during the Three Weeks). Upon its conclusion, The first and last verses from the *Haftorah* of Shabbos Rosh Chodesh are added. These are: "Ko amar Hashem ha-shamayim kisi... V'hayah midei chodesh... Vayatzte'u u-ra'u... V'hayah midei chodesh...."

*Av harachamim* is not recited before Musaf.

During Musaf, the section for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is read instead. It begins "Ata yatzarta and ends *mekadeish hashabbos v'Yisrael v'Roshei Chodashim*.

If you inadvertently concluded the brachah with the regular phrase, *mekadeish hashabbos*, you have fulfilled his obligation. If one made other mistakes in Musaf, see footnote.<sup>44</sup>

43) Someone who forgets to recite *ya'aleh veyavo* in Shacharis should do as follows:

1) If you realized that you omitted *ya'aleh veyavo* before pronouncing Hashem's name in the blessing "hamachazir", return to *ya'aleh veyavo* and continue from there.

2) If you concluded the blessing of *hamachazir* but did not begin *Modim*, recite *ya'aleh veyavo* immediately and then continue with *Modim*.

3) If you passed *Modim* but realized before reciting the second *yih'yū l'ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, return to *Retzei*.

4) If you passed the second *yih'yū l'ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, you must restart the entire Amidah.

5) If you realized only after praying Musaf, you should not repeat the Amidah of Shacharis.

44) If you mistakenly recited the ordinary Shabbos Musaf ("Tikanta Shabbos"):

If you realized your error before reciting the concluding brachah, return to "Ata yatzarta". However, if you already pronounced Hashem's name at the end of the brachah, conclude with the correct wording of "mekadeish hashabbos v'Yisrael v'Roshei Chodashim" and then add "vena'aseh lefanecha b'temidei hayom u'vekorban musaf rosh chodesh hazeh", then continue with *Retzei* as usual.

If you realized your mistake only after beginning *Retzei*, add "vena'aseh..." as above,

It is customary for the *gabbaim* to organize a special *farbrengen* on this Shabbos, beyond the ordinary Shabbos *farbrengen*. They should use this opportunity to discuss and encourage strengthening of all aspects of Torah and mitzvos.

On this Shabbos, it is customary to increase in *divrei Torah* and to rejoice at having completed an entire *sefer* of the five books of Torah and to make resolutions to increase in Torah study and to keep the mitzvos in the best possible way.

The Rebbe cautions<sup>45</sup>: "Strong encouragement is particularly necessary in this *shul* (770). It is necessary to clarify that the participants in the present *farbrengen* have not fulfilled their obligation of holding a special *farbrengen*. I am therefore forced to emphasize and encourage, because I do not want them to depend on me, claiming that due to the present *farbrengen* there will not be a special *farbrengen* held by the *gabbaim* in honor of *Shabbos Chazak*."

**Law of the Redemption:** We offer the following *Korban Mmusaf* in the *Beis Hamikdash* in honor of Rosh Chodesh: two bulls, one ram and seven lambs as burnt-offerings, and one goat for a sin-offering.

**Law of the Redemption:** We will all ascend to the *Beis Hamikdash* in Yerushalayim—not just three times a year, for Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos, but also for each Shabbos and for each *Rosh Chodesh*. (as it says in Navi<sup>46</sup>) And "when Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh coincide, we will come twice in one day, one time for Shabbos, the second for Rosh Chodesh. The clouds will be boarded in early morning to bring them to Yerushalayim and they will daven there and then reboard to return home. (The *possuk* in the Navi<sup>47</sup> says) 'Who will fly like a cloud?' This refers to the early flyers. Then the *possuk* continues, 'and like doves to their roost', these are the *Minchah* arrivals.<sup>48</sup>

It is an ancient custom, to study one *possuk* of the chapter of Tehillim that corresponds with the current years of a person's life on each Rosh Chodesh. The *possuk* should be studied with the commentary of Rashi, and additional commentaries may be added as well. If the current chapter contains less than twelve verses, or in a leap year, when there are more than twelve months, *pessukim* that have been studied on a previous Rosh Chodesh should be studied a second time. Similarly, if the current chapter contains many *pessukim*, then two or three verses should be studied at once on each Rosh Chodesh of the year.

**Minchah:** We add *ya'aleh veyavo*. The rules for someone who makes a mistake are the same as in Shacharis. We do not say "Tzidkoscha".

but after the words "vehasheiv ha'avodah lid'vir beisecha." The same applies if you realized your error after completing *Retzei* but before reciting *Modim*.

If you already began *Modim*, he must return to "Ata yatzarta". This applies even if you had included *ya'aleh veyavo* for Rosh Chodesh in your mistaken prayers.

If you realized your error after pronouncing Hashem's name in either the brachah of "hatov shimcha" or "hamevareich es amo Yisrael", recite the two words *lam'deini chukecha* before returning to "Ata yatzarta".

If you realized only after reciting the second *yih'yū l'ratzon*, you must repeat the entire Amidah. (See references in the Hebrew section).

If you concluded the Amidah but are uncertain as to whether you recited "Ata yatzarta" or the ordinary Shabbos Musaf, you must repeat the entire Musaf correctly.

45) *Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeichi* 5750

46) *Yeshayah* 10:23

47) *Yeshayah* 60:8

48) From *Yalkut Shimoni* on the *possuk*, Remez 503 and discussed in *sichos* and a *Maamar*.

The chapter of *Pirkei Avos* for this week is Perek Beis.

Shabbos ends at **9:18pm**.

Even once Shabbos is over, if you haven't yet davened Maariv, you may continue to eat meat and drink wine. This is because it's still considered Shabbos for you (and you still add *Retzei* to *bentching*).

## HAVDALAH

We make *havdalah* over a cup of wine and give it to a child who has reached the age of *chinuch* regarding brachos, but has not yet reached the age of mourning over Yerushalayim to drink. He should drink at least a full mouthful (his own). If there is no child, the person making *havdalah* can drink the wine himself.

**Melaveh Malkah**, the meal of Dovid King Moshiach: Even those who customarily eat meat as part of *melaveh malkah* every *motzoei Shabbos*, should not eat meat during the Nine Days.<sup>49</sup>

## TUESDAY, 4 AV

On this day, Nechemia and those who went up to Eretz Yisrael with him began to build the walls of Yerushalayim.

## WEDNESDAY, 5 AV

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of the Arizal.

In the beginning of the Hayom Yom, one of the Rebbe's innovations are stated as follows: "In the year 5736 (a spur is on) to add in giving *tzedakah* before davening (Shacharis and Mincha) in connection with the auspicious day of the fifth of Av, the passing of the Arizal, along with inspiration to add in learning the the Arizal's Torah."

In many talks and letters, the Rebbe encourages us to learn from Arizal's conduct. This day (of his *yahrtzeit*) is an opportunity to meditate on his ways. The fact that his actions are knowable to the public, along with stories that even children can learn from, is proof that it is applicable to us and we are obligated to direct *Yiddische* children in his manner.

The direction we should take is both in matters of 'justice', which refers to learning Torah, as well as '*tzedakah*' (as in the *possuk* from *Navi*: "Tzion will be redeemed with justice and returned with *tzedakah*"). Especially, we must add, with even

49) Bypassing their custom during the Nine Days does not require *hataras nedarim*.

more strength, in learning the inner aspect of Torah, which is the Arizal's forte, and with regard to performing mitzvos, also according to the Arizal's teachings. Doing so will effect change not only qualitatively (through comprehending unrealized depth) but also quantitatively (by inspiring us to do more).

The same applies to the second aspect, '*tzedakah*'. Both these ideas (learning and giving) were especially emphasized by the Arizal. These, he performed with no limitations, without a speck of miserliness—for he would place his hand in his pocket and remove a fistful of coins to give away for *tzedakah*, or to pay for a mitzvah-item, without ever counting what he'd retrieved.<sup>50</sup>

Specifically, regarding Torah, the Arizal would "strengthen himself like a lion." He learned with such intensity that, as a result, he would sweat and become physically exhausted. He toiled this way both when he learned the revealed parts of Torah, and when he delved into the more inner dimensions (he would learn the latter in seven different ways, six through the back and forth of *pilpul*, and the seventh by incorporating the secrets of Torah). And regarding *tzedakah* and mitzvos, he was the opposite of a cheapskate and gave without keeping score. When paying for a Mitzva or giving *Tzedaka*, he simply put his hand in his pocket and gave whatever came out, without even counting how many coins he was holding. His joy when performing Mitzvos was also exemplary, so much so that he merited *ruach hakodesh* because of it. Also, it is the Arizal who started the custom to preface davening with *hareini mekabel*.

And in general, the Rebbe encouraged that we should mark this day by engaging in *הפצת המעיינות חוצה*, which was the lifework of the Arizal, and which will surely hasten the coming of Moshiach—קאתי מר דא מלכא משיחא.

[On a number of occasions, the Rebbe instructed people to learn the Arizal's Torah and to Daven with a Minyan (and give *Tzedaka*) at the Arizal's resting place in Tzfas]

**Law of the Redemption:** Specific families merited to donate wood annually for use on the altar, as described in *Ta'anis* 4:5. On the fifth of Menachem-Av (and on the first of Teves), the family of Parosh, son of Yuda, donated wood. They were

50) "It is stated in the writings of the Arizal that the distribution of *tzedakah* is connected with the name [of Hashem] Havaya: For that which is given (i.e., the coin given to *tzedakah*) constitutes the letter Yud; the *hand* that distributes and which contains five (fingers) corresponds to a Hei; the distributor's *arm* forms the letter Vov; and the accepting *hand* constitutes another Hei."

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