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DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

plus Chassidic insights
& excerpts from the Rebbe's talks

Summer & The 3 Weeks

17 Tammuz - 15 Menachem-Av
5786

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Under the auspices of Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita
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B"H

DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

plus Chassidic insights
& excerpts from the Rebbe's talks

The 3 Weeks & Summer

from 17 Tammuz - 15 Menachem-Av 5786

Halachos, Minhagim & Hora'os
for Bein Hametzarim
& Summer Vacation

By

Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

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FOREWORD

Presented here are laws, customs, and selected sichos for the summer months; included are halachos for the 17th of Tammuz, the 9th of Av, and the Three Weeks as well, along with the Rebbe's directives and spiritual guidance for this time period.

The details are derived from multiple sources, revised by **Rabbi M.M. Rotenberg**.

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.

Please note: Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

* * *

TIME TO PREPARE

In a *sichah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah in 5752, the Rebbe states:

"We need to focus on studying the laws that apply to this time of year, during which many changes are made to the standard prayers and there are numerous customs that apply. We should make certain to study these laws in the Code of Jewish Law.

"Recently, yearly calendars have begun to include many of the laws that apply to the relevant time of the year and that are necessary to know. This is particularly useful for those who, for whatever reason, do not have *sefarim* or do not know how to find what they are looking for in the *sefarim* that they own. Now, however, they can simply examine such calendars and easily find the relevant laws.

"It is therefore extremely appropriate for every single person to peruse the contents of these calendars, such as the Kollel Chabad calendar (available both in wall size and pocket size formats) in such a manner that the laws that apply to this time of year will become fixed in his memory. After all, it sometimes happens that a halachic question arises precisely at a point during which it is forbidden to interrupt and ask for someone's guidance - or when there is nobody around to ask. Furthermore, [not having familiarized himself with the relevant laws beforehand] it can happen that one does not even realize that there is a problem to begin with."

LEARN TO KNOW

"It's time to remind everyone," the Rebbe says in a *sichah* of Rosh Chodesh Av,¹ "to

¹ In 5748; free translation of transcription from audio. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Masei* (see more from this occasion further on): "There are also laws that apply to our behavior during *Bein Hametzarim*, but the specifics of these appear in *Shulchan Aruch*—a sefer that surely every Jew has in their possession or is easily

be judicious in learning the halachos applicable to this period of time. I am greatly surprised that no one has made any brouhaha (*tumul*) about this, in line with the clamor accompanying the campaign to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Learning these straight-out halachos in *Shulchan Aruch* is much more timely and relevant (*z'man gerama*) than studying *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Obviously, this includes those pertaining to the Nine Days as well as those regarding the (general time period) already transpiring of the Three Weeks as well.”

All this talk concerning our conduct in this time period, the Rebbe says,² must be prefaced and supplemented with the caveat, “if Moshiach’s coming is delayed, *chas veshalom*,” since (as stated in the Rambam’s Principles of Faith), “we anticipate him” that he will come today, actually. So any resolutions (in the realm of our Divine service during *golus*) must be accompanied by the above stipulation. The truth is, though, that even after Moshiach arrives we will continue to grow in Torah and *avodah*, building on the good resolutions of the time of *golus*.

“In addition to learning the halachos of *Bein Hametzarim*,” the Rebbe says, “both those that apply to the Three Weeks and those specifically to the Nine Days, studied in order to know ‘what actions are required to be performed’ (as long as Moshiach has still not arrived), and also, more generally, our mourning over the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and our state of *golus*—for as our Sages say, ‘Someone who mourns Yerushalayim (in its state of ruin) will merit to see it in its state of joy’—we must also put special emphasis on learning those parts of Torah that focus on *geulah* concepts and on building the third *Beis Hamikdash*, as we have explained many times at length. The essential point is this: the cancellation of the *Churban* and *golus* comes about (not so much by ruminating on the deep and brutal state of *golus* but) primarily through concentrating on the elevated state of *geulah* and through awakening a passionate longing and subsequently, requesting and demanding the future redemption. It is through these efforts that we actually hasten the *geulah*—and even more effectively, ‘transform the darkness into light’ as we uncover the true, inner positive aspect of our loss of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the *golus* itself through this process.”

* * *

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice.

LAWS OF REDEMPTION

The concept of studying these halachos is based on several *sichos*, some of which

accessible to them, and since we make favorable assumptions of every Jew, each of you surely learns the appropriate timely halachos of each season, and has done the same with regard to the halachos of the Three Weeks.”

2) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5751

are quoted below.

TO REALIZE REDEMPTION

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately states,³ “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote Rambam], ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the *Beis Hamikdash* ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the mitzvos that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time—literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy,] ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’”

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded.⁴ “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, ‘We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!’ An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know, in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.”

* * *

General Note: The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., at the close of Shabbos).

Editorial Committee

Tammuz, 5786

Brooklyn N.Y.

³) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 341—*Emphasis in the original*

⁴) *From a sichah addressed to N’shei uB’nos Chabad—Sefer Hasichos 5750*, vol. 2, p. 485.

THE THREE WEEKS

BEIN HAMETZARIM

Bein Hametzarim, which means “between the straits”, is the time between the 17th of Tammuz, when the calamities associated with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* began, and the 9th of Av, when the *Churban* culminated. It is a period of mourning for the Jewish people, one that should affect each of us personally and painfully even today, 1958 years later, as the adage admonishes, “Any generation that doesn’t effectuate the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is considered as if it was destroyed in their time.”⁵

KER A VELT TODAY!

On the subject of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe says⁶: According to the Rogachover, the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash* is **continuous**. This doesn’t simply mean that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed about two thousand years ago and from then on we are righteously mourning, and when it comes to *Tishah B’Av* and the Three Weeks we pray for its rebuilding, similar to how we *daven* every day and say *V’sechezena eineinu* for the *geulah* after more than nineteen hundred years in *golus*.

“No!” says the Rogatchover. The continual destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* occurs **every single day**. When we recognize this we also realize how we need to cry out every single day, “*Ad Mosai!*” The Rogatchover declares that this is explicitly stated in Talmud Yerushalmi. It is written there: “Anyone who **doesn’t effectuate the rebuilding** of the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time,” it is “as if the *Beis Hamikdash* **was destroyed** in his time!”

More than nineteen hundred years have passed. Being as it is Thursday, *Parshas Pinchas*⁷ and it is already after *Maariv*, and the *Beis Hamikdash* still hasn’t been built, we need to know that we must cry out for the *geulah* **as if it was destroyed on Thursday of Parshas Pinchas!** ...And being as *Yidden* have already cried out yesterday, “*Ad Mosai!*”, and the previous day cried out, “*Ad Mosai!*”, and **all the days before that** cried out, “*Ad Mosai!*”—then, *rachmana litzlan*, the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, this afternoon or tonight! **And from this we understand how we have to cry out “Ad Mosai” right now!**

This is not some canny interpretation, but a halachah in Torah, as it says in Torah (itself), “Anyone who didn’t build the *Beis Hamikdash* in his time” it is as if “such and such”.

Imagine! The *Beis Hamikdash* is being burned, and nearby stands a *Yid* who is **hardened**, a stony *Yid*, with a calloused heart, and he sees how the *Beis Hamikdash* is being destroyed in his days— (even) this *Yid* would most certainly turn over the

5) Talmud Yerushalmi Yuma 1,1

6) From a *sichah* of 12 Tammuz, 5744

7) the day of this *sichah*

world (to prevent the destruction)! The Torah of truth and the Torah of life teaches us a lesson in life: [Here the Rebbe cried out, loudly:] **Ker a velt heint! Turn the world over today!**

DON'T DESPAIR!

“Around the time of the Three Weeks,” it says in *Likkutei Sichos*,⁸ “A *Yid* can begin to think about the strength of the darkness of *golus* in general and, more specifically, how dark it is (right now) during the birthpangs of Moshiach. This can lead him, *rachmana litzlan*, to fall into a state of despair, not knowing how he can get through all the hardships. He does know that it is the torment and tribulations during *golus* that will **then** result in the *geulah* being even more elevated; but **now** he finds himself in such a dark and bitter *golus*—how can he now overcome all the difficulties?

“The lesson to educate and uplift us is that, on the contrary, particularly in **this** generation, in the generation of the birthpangs of Moshiach, the inner (hidden) aspect of Torah has been revealed to us. It uncovers and extols the inner meaning of these days: that these days have in them the full strength of the love of Hashem to the *Yidden*.

“To preface these days, we have the *Chag Hageulah* of 12th and 13th of Tammuz, which shows how we can bring out this inner, higher level into revelation **during** the time of *golus* itself (in a way that the concealment will be annulled even on a surface level). This encourages and strengthens *Yidden* to focus their energy during these days on the inner aspect of *golus*, and then, ever more so, will we avoid being affected by the bitterness and lowliness of it.

“Though we must keep all of the laws of mourning of the Three Weeks, as is required by the *Shulchan Aruch* in all of their detail, we find ways **in the spirit of Torah** to act with happiness even during these days. For example, make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* that will transform the day into a ‘*yom tov of Rabbanan*’ also during **these** days of the Nine Days! (We can do this to the point that we can even eat a *seudah* of meat when we make a *siyum* on a *mesechta* during the Nine Days.) Or, more generally, we can focus our energy on learning Torah (which gladdens the heart), with an emphasis on the learning of the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* (about building the *Beis Hamikdash* and the like). Through learning Torah on the subjects of how the *Beis Hamikdash* looked, ‘I consider it as if they were involved in the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*’.

“Conducting ourselves in this manner of revealing the inner meaning of the Three Weeks in the same way that it will be when Moshiach comes, then, these days will be transformed ‘into rejoicing and happiness, and *yomim tovim*.’”

ANTICIPATION

Concerning the time period of the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Rebbe says⁹:

8) vol. 18, p. 316

9) *Ibid.*, p. 411

On the one hand, this is a time during which we have the obligation to “mourn over Yerushalayim.” On the other hand, it is specifically this time that demands of us to have a special strength to avoid falling into a state of despair from *golus, chas v’shalom*. For we know (that we will ultimately return), as the *Haftorah* of *Parshas Masei* ends, “Will you not from this time call me, “My Father, You, the Master of my youth?” Even better: encourage yourself, and other *Yidden*, during the multiplied darkness of the birthpangs of Moshiach, and all the more during the Three Weeks, through strengthening the aspect of “I await for him that he will come every day.” (How will he come?) Learn and occupy yourself with studying the “formation of the *Beis Hamikdash* and all of its *halachos*.”

HAPPY?

During the time of the Three Weeks, the Rebbe encourages,¹⁰ “we should increase in all areas of Torah and *mitzvos* with a *shturem* (extra enthusiasm), especially in the area of *simchah*. Certainly, the intention isn’t an artificial joy, where one pinches his cheek so that people should think he’s happy or, even more heartily, does some movement like clapping his hands. The intention is to reach a true happiness that permeates the emotions of the heart. For this reason, we should exert effort to utilize every opportunity to organize *farbrengens* during the Three Weeks. This will lead to happiness not only amongst the participants, but also to happiness Above, since through increasing in joy, we minimize and nullify all of the undesirable aspects of the Three Weeks, to the point that it leads to effect *nechamah* (comfort), a double *nechamah* in our physical reality.”

ADVANTAGEOUS

In *Or Hatorah*¹¹: There is a parable of a king who, when traveling, is more easily reachable to converse with than when he is at home. This accessibility is not limited to those who are worthy. In the same way, as is explained by the *Avodas Yisrael*¹² in the name of the Maggid, all who pursue a revelation of G-dliness, will reach it *davka* during the Three Weeks, as in the above parable.

In several *sichos* (too many to enumerate here), the advantage of the days of the Three Weeks is explained. Despite the fact that on a surface level these days appear to be of sieges and calamities and a time of decreased happiness to the point that we even have laws of mourning, it is clear that we should not spend this time focused on bitterness and depressing subjects, *chas v’shalom*.

On the contrary, the whole point of this descent is in order for there to be an ascent, and when we experience an incomparable descent, the ascent will be so as well. Even more than that, the inner essence and truth of these days themselves is an elevated goodness; being hidden good it is rooted in a higher level than revealed good.

Additionally, when you look at reality through the lens of the Torah, and not the

10) *Roshei Devarim* from *Shabbos Parshas Masei* 5744

11) *Parshas Vayeshev*, vol. 5, p. 900. See also *Ma’anos Kodesh* 5745, bottom of pp. 110 ff.

12) *Parshas Masei*

way reality is perceived in this world below, you see only pure goodness. Through our Divine service of the Three Weeks (*Bein Hametzarim*), that is “from the *metzar* (strait) I call out”—from the constraints of *golus* we are able to “draw down from above the ‘higher strait’ (which is a place) that no mind can grasp,” as is brought in *Chassidus* concerning this time period.

STRAIT TO FREEDOM

When Moshiach comes, the good will be revealed below in a tangible way, within the reality of this world. This revelation will be like the advantage of light that comes after darkness. And after the *metzar*, as the *passuk* continues, “Hashem answers me with *merchav* (latitude)”, an essential latitude and extravagance, resulting in these days being transformed into days of joy and happiness, to the point that the happiness is incomparable to the rest of the days of happiness.

We already have a spark and taste of this positive, inner aspect of the Three Weeks during *golus*, especially in more recent generations nearest to the time of Moshiach, which is when the idea of happiness and *geulah* in the month of Tammuz was revealed. This idea was manifested in the *Chag Hagulah* of the 12th and 13th of Tammuz to the point that the whole month becomes a month of *geulah*. This is already visibly apparent before the days of the Three Weeks even begin so that, from the start, we should know the inner theme of these days.

The closer that we are to Moshiach, the less we feel the *Churban* and subsequent *golus* during the Three Weeks. The feeling of preparing for the *geulah*, which is the good within these days, continually increases. Since we now find ourselves right before the *geulah*, the positive aspect of the Three Weeks is continuing to be increasingly felt and emphasized, and through this we will come to the complete *geulah*. Standing on the threshold of the *geulah*, **only** the positive of the Three Weeks is emphasized.

NUMBERS & MORE

We begin with the start of the Three Weeks, on the **17th** of Tammuz, seventeen being the *gematria*, numerical value, of the word **טוב**—*tov* (good). This is because the 17th of Tammuz is “an auspicious day for Hashem”. Concerning the events that took place on this day, the primary of them (both chronologically and qualitatively) was the smashing of the *Luchos*. Despite this event being something undesirable, it has within it a positive element and, indeed, the highest type of good. How so? As a result of the smashing of the first set of *Luchos*, the second set of *Luchos* were given, which were “of a double strength”, (and thereby caused an increase of Torah) even to the point of infinity. The same applies to the culmination of the Three Weeks, the 9th of Av. How could it be so? Because this is the day that Moshiach was born; the *mazel* of our righteous Moshiach was strongest during the moments of the *Churban*.

The three **weekly parshios** of this time also carry themes closely associated with the *geulah*: In *Matos-Masei* and *Devarim*, the Torah speaks of conquering and dividing the Holy Land (that includes the three areas of *Keini*, *Kenizi* and *Kadmoni*, which will only become ours in the future); previously, in *Pinchas*, there is the connection

both in name: “Pinchas is Eliyahu” who will come and announce the future *geulah*, and the *parshah*’s content, which is about counting the *Yidden*, alluding to our tenth (and final) census in the future. It also speaks of dividing the Land, and mentions many *korbanos* (especially the *korbanos* of the festivals, hinting at the transformative nature of the Three Weeks to days of festival and rejoicing). Even earlier, preceding this time period, *Parshas Balak* explicitly prophesies Moshiach’s coming.

This also applies to the **number of the weeks**—three—“because three is a *chazakah*, the strength of something ‘fixed.’” The Three Weeks are a *chazakah* in matters of holiness. As well, there is the idea of a descent of three gradations, which makes it as if the descent has an established *chazakah* and power, and thus an incomparable ascent is accomplished. The essential theme of the Three Weeks is the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash*, which will be for all of eternity being the work of Hashem Himself, and totally incomparable to the first two *Batei Mikdash*.

The same applies to the **number of days** of this time period. There are twenty-one days in the Three Weeks, which is the amount of time it takes for an almond to grow. This is the fastest gestation period of any fruit, representing an alacrity and speediness with great overpowering strength to annul the obstacles and impediments of *golus*. This is apparent in a detail of the process as well: Almonds are bitter when they are small, and when they finish ripening (at twenty-one days) they become sweet. The point of the Three Weeks is to transform these days into days of rejoicing and happiness, happy and sweet days.

THREE WEEKS’ RESTRICTIONS

The laws and restrictions of *Bein Hametzarim* commence on the **evening** of the 17th of Tammuz.

HAIRCUTS

Both men and women¹³ refrain from cutting their hair during this period. This includes all facial hair as well as hair anywhere else on the body. Adults may not cut children’s hair.

We are also restricted from trimming or waxing eyebrows, mustaches and the like, even hair around the private parts. If the mustache interferes with eating, it may be trimmed.

However, it is permissible—indeed it is a *mitzvah*—to cut a forelock (*tshup*, in Yiddish) during the Three Weeks.¹⁴

When a boy’s third birthday falls during the Three Weeks, the *upshernish* is generally delayed until the 10th of Av after midday. However, since this year

¹³ A woman may cut hair for reasons of modesty, as well as in preparation for *mikveh* (even if it is during the Nine Days for an immersion following *Tishah B’Av*, as we refrain from trimming three days before immersing). She may also remove any body hair that could render her unattractive to her husband, even during the Nine Days.

¹⁴ See www.halacha2go.com #243

the fast is on Thursday, the cutting takes place on the morning of the tenth of Av (Friday). This delay, however, does not include the other customs associated with the *upshernish*, such as wearing *tzitzis*, saying the morning *brochos*, *Birchas Hamazon* and the bedtime *Shema*; these should begin on the day of the birthday.

Until Rosh Chodesh Av, it is permissible to cut and style a *sheitel* and it is not considered cutting hair. (Concerning the time after Rosh Chodesh, see further in the laws of the Nine Days.)

ENGAGEMENT & MARRIAGE

It is permissible to get engaged and host a *Lechaim* during the Three Weeks. However, during the Nine Days (starting from Rosh Chodesh Av), we do not hold a festive meal for the occasion; rather, light refreshments may be served.

Weddings may not be held, even without a festive meal, and even for someone who has not yet fulfilled his obligation of bearing children. This includes the remarriage of a divorced couple.

We may conduct a *sheva brochos* meal during this time without music or dancing.

SHEHECHIYANU

It is best to avoid making a *Shehechianu* blessing during the Three Weeks. Therefore, we refrain from eating new fruit¹⁵ or wearing new clothing. Our custom is to refrain from blessing *Shehechianu* at any time during the Three Weeks, even on Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh.

The restriction on new clothing during the Three Weeks applies to garments of substantial worth. Clothing of lesser significance may be purchased and worn until Rosh Chodesh Av—this includes underwear, socks and shoes. Someone may also purchase and wear a new pair of *tzitzis*. New glasses are also permitted, provided they are for improved vision, not pleasure.

Someone whose wife gives birth to a daughter should make the blessing of *Shehechianu* upon seeing her for the first time, even during the Three Weeks. A father also blesses *Shehechianu* at his firstborn son's *pidyon haben* during the Three Weeks.

The *brachah* of *hatov vehametiv* may be recited during the Three Weeks.¹⁶

DANCING & MUSIC

Dancing is prohibited during the Three Weeks.

¹⁵ A pregnant woman may eat a new fruit without blessing *Shehechianu*, out of concern that an unsatisfied craving may endanger the child. Similarly, an ill person may eat a new fruit without reciting *Shehechianu*.

¹⁶ This applies to its recital for various occasions such as the birth of a male child, and on wine, when warranted. (For a comprehensive overview on saying *hatov vehametiv* on wine, see the supplement for the Day-to-Day Guide for Purim 5786.)

We may not play¹⁷ or listen to music, including recorded music. Some are lenient to listen to music which is only vocals (without instruments). However, many contemporary *poskim* say this is the same as music. Certainly, some of these recordings sound very professional and essentially negate the original purpose of the custom. However, there is room to be lenient when listening to slow *niggunim* that are recorded primarily with vocals and only some background musical accompaniment.

Listening to music in order to stay alert while driving for extended periods is permissible—even obligatory—especially when driving through the night.

The prohibition on music applies at camps too, especially since the camp's objective is to educate children toward *yiras Shamayim*. In a day camp or daycare setting, where it is necessary to calm younger children who have not yet reached the age of *chinuch*, and the music is not intended for joy, the Morah may be lenient.

Music lessons or practice for students are permitted from the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av when they are for the purpose of developing skills to earn a livelihood. However, learning for pleasure is prohibited.

We refrain from dancing and playing music even at a *seudas mitzvah*, such as a bar mitzvah, *siyum*, *sheva brochos*, and similar occasions.

The Rebbe answers someone regarding a *siyum sefer Torah* during the Three Weeks: "It needs further study; a more suitable date would be appropriate." The Rebbe negates holding such an event after Rosh Chodesh Av.

TRAVEL, TRIPS & GENERAL SAFETY

The Three Weeks is a time of heightened risk and we must take care to avoid any element of danger.

From the 17th of Tammuz, we refrain from going out alone between the end of the fourth halachic hour until the end of the ninth halachic hour.¹⁸ Similarly, we take care not to walk in a place that is in between the sun and the shade. These restrictions should be adhered to in a desolate place. However, where there are passersby, the concern doesn't apply.

Trips should be less frequent during the Three Weeks. But if the excursions are for health reasons or as an incentive for Torah learning, they are certainly permitted.

From *Likkutei Dibburim*¹⁹: During the two midsummer months (in Lubavitch) from Shavuot until *Shabbos Nachamu*—except for a certain break during the Three Weeks, which were days of real mourning, the laws of the period being punctiliously

17) A professional musician may play for non-Jews until Rosh Chodesh Av excluding the actual day of the 17th of Tammuz.

18) Calculated by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve parts. Thus 1/12 of the day is a halachic hour. For example, if the sun rises at 5 am and sets at 7:30 pm, a halachic hour is 72.5 minutes.

19) (English) vol. 1, p. 241. Published by *Kehos*, 5747

observed in all their details—people would sometimes take a little stroll across the marketplace between Minchah and Maariv. No one ever went out for a walk between Pesach and Shavuot, but from then on people took the opportunity of enjoying the pleasant summer weather.

Swimming—in a pool or the ocean—is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av. However, extra caution must be exercised. Many refrain from swimming in rivers due to the danger they present.

When an extended trip is necessary, it is proper to make significant preparations before the 17th of Tammuz, to emphasize that the trip began before the Three Weeks.

MEDICAL CARE

When possible, it is proper to delay complex medical procedures until after *Tishah B'Av*—as the popular saying goes: “Any delay is good.” If the doctor insists, it should definitely be scheduled before *Shabbos Chazon*.

Of course, in a life-threatening situation, any procedure should be done immediately without any delay.

Routine procedures that pose no risk may be performed, including dental care and the like.

Children and students should be rebuked gently; no parent or teacher should use corporal punishment at all during the Three Weeks.²⁰

HOUSE-BUYING, MOVING, RENOVATING

Though some are stringent and refrain from buying property during the Three Weeks because it is an “inauspicious time”, according to the letter of the law someone may buy a **residential** home, especially if they will incur a loss by forfeiting the deal. (It is permitted even during the Nine Days.) When the closing is after *Tishah B'Av*, there is no concern at all.

It is customary not to move into a new home during the Three Weeks (even when *Shehechianu* wouldn't be recited). It is proper to move in after the 15th of Av, and if possible, in the month of Elul, which is the month of mercy.

Expansion of living quarters is allowed until Rosh Chodesh Av, though many avoid starting a new build during this time.²¹

As well, small home improvements may be done until Rosh Chodesh, but decorating the house, such as painting, should be avoided. If someone already contracted a non-Jew and they began the job, it may be completed until Rosh Chodesh Av.

Someone who has moved into a new home before the 17th of Tammuz should not schedule a *chanukas habayis* feast during the Three Weeks.

20) Regarding hitting in general, see [#6349](http://www.asktherav.com) for a comprehensive discussion.

21) See [#15381](http://www.asktherav.com)

THE REBBE'S HORA'OS

(From the preface to *Chidushim U'bi'urim B'hilchos Beis Habechirah*)

Torah & Tzedakah: In accordance with the verse, “*Tzion* will be redeemed with justice (*mishpat*) and those who return to her—with *tzedakah*”, we should increase in both Torah study (*mishpat*), specifically in the halachos of *Bein Hametzarim*, and *tzedakah* during the Three Weeks.

Five Periods: The Three Weeks are subdivided into periods of increasing intensity: (1) From the 17th of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av (2) from Rosh Chodesh until the week of the 9th of Av (3) the week of *Tishah B'Av* itself (4) the day before the fast and (5) the actual fast day. We should intensify our Torah and *tzedakah* at each ensuing phase of the Three Weeks.

Erev Rosh Chodesh: On the day before Rosh Chodesh Av, we should especially amplify our Torah study, prayer and *tzedakah*. We should at least distribute the monetary equivalent of two meals to *tzedakah* – and ideally, the equivalent of **three** meals.

Preempt with Positive: We should resolve to fulfill the above directive **before** the Three Weeks commence. Those who have not yet made such a resolution should do so **at their very first opportunity**—and the sooner (even by a moment) the better!²² Obviously, someone who failed to accomplish any of the above directives on the applicable dates should make it up afterwards.

Mivtzoim: During the Three Weeks, we should put special effort into the mitzvah campaigns: Ahavas Yisrael, Kosher, Education, Torah-Study, Torah Books, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Shabbos Candles, Kosher Diet and Family Purity.

MORE LOVE

In several *sichos kodesh*, the Rebbe explains how the reason for the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* was baseless hatred, and that in order to undo the cause we need to increase in *Ahavas Yisrael*, love for a fellow Jew, and *Achdus Yisrael*, unity of the Jewish people, in a manner of baseless love. This includes the areas of Torah, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah* as a community—with special emphasis on these acts during the Three Weeks. Now, standing on the threshold of *geulah*, it is certain that the reason for *golus* has already been rectified, and so the emphasis on *Ahavas Yisrael* is in the way of a taste (of the future), to the point that this love is the beginning of the *geulah*. The *geulah* is tied with a point of Jewish unity that is higher than any division, emphasized in the togetherness of *Yidden* on the level of *yechidah* (the very essence of the soul), which is a spark of the *neshamah* of Moshiach, who is the *yechidah k'lolis* (general *yechidah* of all Jews).

²² “According to the halachic ruling in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 571:3*”

HILCHOS BEIS HABECHIRAH

Make it a point to study about the *Beis Hamikdash*²³ during the Three Weeks. This learning is also applicable to women and children.²⁴

WHAT TO LEARN

“In the days preceding *erev Tishah B’Av* and *Tishah B’Av*,” the Rebbe says,²⁵ “we must study the necessary halachos and the established *shiurim* that we have. Increase in learning the *perakim* of the *navi* Yechezkel that discusses all about the *Beis Hamikdash*, its exits and entrances, and the commentaries on those chapters. Then go on to *Meseches Middos* with commentaries, and finally, *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, the laws of the *Beis Hamikdash* of the Rambam’s *Mishnah Torah* with its *mefarshim*. It is certain that Hashem will then keep His promise that ‘I consider it as if they are involved in its construction.’ And this is the preparation that will result most speedily in the building of the third *Beis Hamikdash* in its designated palace, with the coming of Moshiach, now.”

HOW TO LEARN

“Standing on the threshold of Moshiach, who is coming immediately,” says the Rebbe,²⁶ “it is understood that the study of *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* needs to be **in an entirely different way**; at the very least, the learning shouldn’t be because one is overcome with emotions of mourning and due to his efforts to rectify the lack that resulted from the *churban Beis Hamikdash*, but because of the yearning and desire for Hashem and the completion of the third *Beis Hamikdash*... Additionally, and more essentially, the study should be an outcome of the completely certain knowledge and recognition that these aren’t ‘the (farfetched) halachos of Moshiach’, but they are **actual, pertinent halachos for the coming moment**, since the ‘future *mikdash* that we anticipate is built and perfected (already now above, and immediately) will be revealed and will come from the Heaven’ **this very moment!**”

WHEN TO LEARN

At this time, in 5740, the Rebbe spoke²⁷: “We are now starting the Three Weeks and I was waiting to see if anyone would talk about (studying *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*) this year, and I see that no one has. So now that it’s ten days from the 17th of Tammuz, a few days before the Nine Days, someone thought to put a notice about this in the newspaper! And only then did people find the courage to write to me all perturbed, asking if it’s appropriate to learn the *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year because

23) Primary sources include: From *Tanach*, from the *navi* Yechezkel from chapter 40 & on; in the *Mishnah* and *Gemara*, *Mesechtos Tamid* and *Midos*; In the Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, adding in all these the explanations and commentary that are expanded upon in *Chassidus*.

24) See the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei* 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 496 ff. Also, *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei* 5740. In *Sichos Kodesh*, pp. 658 ff.

25) From the *sichah* of *erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*, 24 Tammuz, 5736. In *Sichos Kodesh*, p. 485. **This year marks 50 years since the Rebbe introduced the *Beis Hamikdash* study campaign.**

26) *Sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5751, part 9

27) *Roshei Devarim* of the *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*

I haven't mentioned it yet! But we have already mentioned this the last four years, and we have mentioned that we should publicize this all over, and that's what we have actually done, and it was accepted in several places. And I have not said this in a way of 'a decree I have decreed' (without explanation), but I have also given a reason for this, and the reason is relevant every year at this time, this year included.

"And since we have already done it for three years, we must continue, because the halachah is that if someone does something three times, and he didn't say *bli neder*, he must continue to do it, and it is certain that in the past years we didn't say *bli neder* when we have studied *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, because I didn't mention that we have to. It is therefore certain that we need to do it this year as well! And despite all that, someone asks me a question if we have to learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* also this year—does every single thing need to be repeated over and over?! And may it be His will that since we have at least now caught on and placed a notice in the newspaper, we should follow from now on what it says in the notice, that we should learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* in the coming days, and specifically in the Nine Days, and more specifically the week of *Tishah B'Av*, and most especially on *erev Tishah B'Av* and *Tishah B'Av* itself. And certainly we need to study today, since Moshiach is coming today; and so too, if, G-d forbid, Moshiach has not come by tomorrow, we will also have to learn tomorrow...

"Even once Moshiach arrives we must learn *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*. Even though Moshiach will build the *Beis Hamikdash*, every *Yid* can potentially contribute. Say, Moshiach will be building the *Beis Hamikdash*, and one detail there won't be according to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* of the Rambam. Any *Yid* should be able to go over to our righteous Moshiach and ask him—of course, with this introduction, 'With all due respect to *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, who is one of the "eight princes of Man" and of the "seven Shepherds"...perhaps, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* has constructed a detail of the *Beis Hamikdash* not as it is in Rambam? And if it is so, where is the source to change how the Rambam rules?' Being that 'Torah is not in the Heavens' and 'a shy person doesn't learn', if a *Yid* will doubt the way Moshiach is building the *Beis Hamikdash*, he may, and he **must**, ask him about it. And certainly Moshiach will bear no grudge and not become vexed, since he knows that the path of Torah learning is 'the shy person doesn't learn', and he will therefore certainly respond to his question."

WHO SHOULD LEARN

And in 5741²⁸: These days we must endeavor to learn the parts of Torah that are connected to *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, and to influence other *Yidden* in the same way, because through this every *Yid* builds the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the foundation of the entire world. As is explained in the words of *Chazal*, that in the Holy of Holies in the *Beis Hamikdash* on the Temple Mount is the *even hashesia*, the foundation stone, from which the entire world exists. As a result, every man and woman who learns *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* builds the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! During this time, we need to go out into the street and find a *Yid* and

28) *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Matos*

say to him, “Listen up! You need to build the *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!” This will be accomplished through learning the parts of Torah connected to the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*. He may claim in return that he doesn’t know any of the *Alef-Beis*, not even the ‘*Alef-Beis*’ (the very basics) of *Yiddishkeit*. Tell him: “All this deliberation has no place when you need to build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world! Ay, you don’t understand the parts of Torah connected to the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Lashon Hakodesh*, so learn the material in another language—but you must build a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world!”

When we know that every single person is building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world through learning the part of Torah connected with the building of the *Beis Hamikdash*, all deliberations that result from a lack of emotional or spiritual serenity fall away, because what are they worth compared to building a *Beis Hamikdash* for the entire world, (that place) “from which the entire world exists”?. “And through this,” we declare to every Jew, “you accomplish that these days [of the Three Weeks] will be transformed to days of rejoicing and happiness and *yomim tovim*, with the true and final *geulah*, immediately!

THE BOTTOM LINE

In reference to all this, the Rebbe’s words, brought in *Likkutei Sichos*,²⁹ implore us: “This is the main thing here: **now** is the time to be involved in these efforts (to learn and publicize the learning of *Hilchos Beis Habeirah*), to begin them even before *Bein Hametzarim*, before the Nine Days. This opportunity must be, as in the vernacular, ‘a priority, with extra attentiveness and alacrity, more intense and stronger, the effort doubled and quadrupled, exponentially greater than at any other time’. However, if for any reason, a day or two passes without action, we must simply apply ourselves even more assiduously, and make up for what we missed with an augmented learning schedule. And since, in this case, there is an aspect of guilt of having missed a peak juncture in time, do as *Chazal* advise: If you are accustomed to reading one page, now read two etc.—and thereby ‘double down’ in this undertaking.”

MAKING FARBRENGENS

“To add even more *simchah*,” the Rebbe says on the Shabbos before the Three Weeks began,³⁰ “so the addition of joy in itself will break all the limitations of *golus* since ‘joy breaks boundaries’—it is very favorable and appropriate to add and increase in happy opportunities in these days, (specifically) in joyous *farbrengens* after the 17th of Tammuz (during the Three Weeks), in a manner that is permitted according to *Shulchan Aruch* (such as holding a *seudas mitzvah* or the like), if, G-d forbid, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* is still delayed another day. The benefit of this is both with regard to its component of joy, which breaks the limitations of *golus*, and additionally—and primarily—through this occasion heightening in the aspect of ‘brothers who sit together’ with *Ahavas Yisrael* and Jewish unity, for ‘partaking

²⁹) vol. 13, p. 279

³⁰) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Balak*, in *Sefer Hasichos 5747*, vol. 2, p. 471

together fosters closeness’, and thus nullify the cause for *golus* altogether.”

“Add in the realm of joy, literally,” the Rebbe further explains the next day,³¹ “which is accomplished through gatherings of Jews generally, and more specifically when they get together for a *Chassidische farbrengen*—as elaborated by the (Friediker) Rebbe.³² Even during the Three Weeks—should the arrival of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* be delayed *chas veshalom* for some minutes or hours— whenever it is permissible to be joyous within the parameters of *Shulchan Aruch*, whether at a *bris milah*, a *pidyon haben* or another occasion.

“Even within this framework, at the appropriate time and situation, within a holy mien, and with proper order, the celebration can be beyond measure and limitation, as we have stated many times that Torah can accomplish this, if led by a lively, dynamic person who lives with *Toras chaim*, the ‘living Torah’ and within *Toras chaim* itself, with the inner aspect of Torah, which enlivens and breeds ever more life.

“And since this is required of every Jew, it is a sign that each one has the inherent power to balance both these counterpoints—keeping in mind, always, that by accomplishing this within the correct parameters, keeping to the proper setup, in a time and place sanctioned by Torah, that it will certainly be a great *simchah*, beyond all limitations, but not *chas veshalom*, with undue intoxication—and that is meant literally, without room for alternate interpretations, as we have discussed many times (the limits on drinking).” (After reciting the after-brachah, the Rebbe stood up from the table, and distributed bottles of *marshke* to those who were arranging *farbrengens*.)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, EVE OF 17 TAMMUZ

THE NIGHT PRE-FAST

For a fast that begins in the morning, such as this one, you may eat until dawn (see time below) if you did not go to sleep for the night. Temporarily dozing off does not constitute going to sleep. If you did sleep properly before the fast, you can only eat if you stipulated before going to sleep that you would eat or drink when you awake. Someone who usually rises to drink during the night can drink without making a stipulation.

Even if you have satisfied the requirements of being able to eat before the fast, do not begin a proper meal within a halachic half-hour of dawn. You may snack on fruit, vegetables and non-alcoholic beverages, and eat up to a *kebeitzah*³³ of *mezonos*.

NIGHT UN-FAST

On the eve of the 10th of Teves 5752, the Rebbe explains that although *Asarah B'Teves* begins at night (as is the case with all Jewish dates), the actual fast only begins at dawn. The lack of fasting on the eve of the 10th of Teves symbolizes the

31) 15 Tammuz 5747, transcribed from audio.

32) In a story he told, as recorded in the appendix to *Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchak*.

33) Generally, the volume of food that would fit into two small matchboxes.

power that is granted at that time to reverse the negative events that the fast day commemorates. It is an auspicious time for *teshuvah* that will bring the Redemption and a night of opportunity to forever nullify the fast before it begins. The Rebbe pointed out that the night stretches for a number of hours, which offers ample time for *teshuvah*.

THURSDAY, 17TH OF TAMMUZ

This day is a communal fast day during which eating and drinking is forbidden, as it is the day that the walls of Yerushalayim were breached.

There were five events that occurred throughout history on the 17th of Tammuz: (1) The *Luchos* were broken (2) The daily *Korban Tamid* offering ceased in the *Beis Hamikdash* (3) During the time of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached (4) The wicked Apostomus burned the Torah (5) A graven image was put in the *Heichal*.

THE FAST

The main purpose of observing a fast day is to awaken our hearts toward the path of *teshuvah*. *Poskim* write that the fast obligates a person to examine their actions and rectify their negative deeds—refraining from eating and drinking are but a means by which to focus ourselves inward to *teshuvah*.³⁴ Those who utilize the fast day as a break in their normal schedule for trips or other banal activities make the minor aspect all-important while ignoring its essential purpose.

The Rambam writes that to truly experience the spiritual weight of the fast day, we must not occupy our time with frivolous or enjoyable activities, but feel bothered and distressed, as the *possuk* in Eichah states: “Of what should a living person complain? Their own sins...” The Sheloh adds that anyone who does not fast with purpose is merely torturing themselves (with gratuitous thirst and hunger). The true intention of fasting is to put mind over matter and focus on spirituality when we are without the physical constraints of feeding and hydrating the body—similar to the experience of *Olam Haba* where we will be fully occupied in enjoying the rays of shining G-dly light without distraction. On this day, we can access this spiritual delight, with our acts of *teshuvah*, prayer, *tzedakah*—and Torah study, which is equal to them all.

EXEMPTIONS

Pregnant women, or nursing women who have difficulty fasting, and other people feeling ill, are exempt.

A *Chosson* and *Kallah* during their *sheva brachos*, the week following their wedding, fast today.

The custom is that for a *bris* which takes place on the 17th of Tammuz, the father,

³⁴) though it is not halachically acceptable to disingenuously avoid fasting with a *teshuvah*-focused day.

mohel and *sandek* still fast. A minor child is given the wine to drink and the *seudah* takes place that night.

Someone who is exempt from fasting should eat in private and refrain from eating delicacies. They should suffice with only as much food as is necessary.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: FAST TO FEAST

All fasts will be nullified when Moshiach comes. More so, they are destined to be *yomim tovim* and days of rejoicing.

The last halachah on fasting in the *Shulchan Aruch* states: “These days will be transformed to joyous occasions in the Future Era.” The Rebbe notes³⁵ that this statement is halachically binding in the here and now as well (for what is *Shulchan Aruch* but a guide for living today?). How? Our acts of *teshuvah* and fasting affect our current circumstances to the point that they have the power to actually transform the fast day into a Yom Tov.

FASTING

The fast begins from dawn (*alos hashachar*) at **3:41 am**.³⁶

Someone who travels to a different time zone during the fast continues to fast until nightfall (*tzeis hakochovim*) in the place that they are at that time.³⁷

It is a *minhag Yisrael* to increase *tzedakah* on fast days. We estimate the value of what we would have eaten that day and give it to a poor person on the eve of the fast.

We do not rinse our mouths on a fast day.³⁸

EATING BY MISTAKE

Someone who mistakenly breaks their fast must still complete it. They are not required to compensate by fasting on a different day (unless they choose to as an atonement for breaking the fast). If someone eats less than a *koseves* (the size of a large date) within the timeframe of *k'dei achilas pras*,³⁹ or drinks less than a *reviis*, they are still considered to be fasting and pray *Aneinu* as normal. If they consumed more than that, they should replace the words “*Aneinu b'yom tzom ta'aniseinu*” with “*Aneinu b'yom tzom ta'anis zeh*” during Minchah.

Someone who is not fasting should not be given an *aliyah*. However, after the fact,

35) In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 416; see fn 38.

36) There are various methods of calculating sunrise. The time listed here follows the opinion that *alos hashachar* is when the angle of the rising sun is the position of 1.16 degrees from the horizon.

37) If extremely weak, and fasting is causing great difficulty, there is room for leniency to break the fast at the time the fast is over in the location of origin.

38) If there is specific need—such as for a halitosis sufferer, the mouth can be rinsed, but use astringent wash and lean forward so none of it is inadvertently swallowed. See [#1988](http://www.asktherav.com)

39) The halachic span of time that is based on the norm for someone consuming a half-loaf of bread.

a non-faster⁴⁰ who is called up to the Torah and is embarrassed (and concerned of *chillul Hashem*) to decline, may continue with the *aliyah*. Even this year—when the Torah reading is on an established *Yom Kriah* (Thursday) and not merely as a consequence of the fast day—a non-faster should initially not be called up. However, once called up he can take the *aliyah* only during **Shacharis**; at Minchah, he should decline.

Bathing and doing laundry on the fast of the 17th of Tammuz are permitted.⁴¹

SHACHARIS

Selichos are said during *davening*.

Only the *chazzan* says *Aneinu*, and only during the repetition of the *Amidah*. In both Shacharis and Minchah, *Aneinu* is recited by the *chazzan* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. If a *chazzan* mistakenly omits *Aneinu*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

The order for Shacharis is as follows: *Chazaras Hashatz* is followed by *Tachanun* and *Nefilas Apayim*; *V'hu Rachum* (up until *Ki Ein Ozer*); *Selichos* (starting with *Al titnu*; omit *Ashamnu*); the long *Avinu Malkeinu* (using the fast-day version, with *Zachreinu* in place of *Chadeish*) and then *Va'anachnu lo nedah*; half-*Kaddish*; then *Kel erech apaim*. Then the *sefer Torah* is brought out and three *aliyos* are read from the section *Vayechal Moshe*.

The *minhag* in 770 is that when there is a *chosson*, a *bris* was held that day, or the like, the congregation (aside from the *chosson* and the *ba'al habris*) says *Selichos*, but omit *Tachanun*, *Nefilas Apayim* and *Avinu Malkeinu*. When this is done, start with *Selach lanu* and continue without omitting anything; *viduy* of *Ashamnu* is said.⁴²

INTRODUCTORY 3

The Rebbe explains⁴³: Before starting *Selichos* on the 17th of Tammuz, we headline the Three Weeks with the recitation of three *pessukim*, which can be considered the most essential aspect of the *Selichos* in general and compared to the role of the *Amidah*. The content of these three verses, and the order as well, are significant.

The first of these *pessukim* is not about personal accounting as would be

40) This applies to someone who broke their fast by mistake as well. See [#29087](http://www.asktherav.com)

41) Though there are some who maintain that *ba'alei nefesh* (very pious individuals) should avoid bathing with hot water, and even institute all the constraints of *Tishah B'Av* on other fasts as well. See the discussion on [#346](http://www.halacha2go.com) and [#19897](http://www.asktherav.com)

42) There is no interference with the order of the *Selichos* itself; the congregation begins with *Selach lanu*, and also recites the *viduy* part of *Selichos* (*Ashamnu*) as usual. It is only the *Tachanun*, etc., that are recited as part of Shacharis that are skipped on such an occasion—and this concession is sufficient recognition of the *chosson's* presence, or of the *bris* that will take place.

43) *Sichas Tes-Vav Tammuz 5742*, at the end of the *farbrengen* after saying the *brachah acharonah*.

expected when beginning supplicatory prayers, but with an outcry—one sourced in Torah—of *Al Titnu*: “And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem praised in the land”,⁴⁴ which is a demand from Hashem to not only rebuild Yerushalayim, but not to be silent and continue to implore and beg until Yerushalayim reaches the stage of receiving accolades.

The reasoning for this is stated in the next *possuk* we recite, *Ki imcha*: “For with You is the Source of life, in Your light we will see light.”⁴⁵ It is the belief that Hashem brings into being and continuously enlivens everything, including this *golus* (which is long and terrible), but because we know it is “with Him” and that He is “the source of life”, that we realize that eventually its inner greatness and purpose will be revealed in the Future Era, when darkness will be transformed into light. And how will we “see the light”? Through “His light”, which is the Torah that illuminates the path of Man and which states, “give Him no rest” (and demand the *geulah*).

Only with these prefaces can the mind and heart focus, and be capable of the true, complete *teshuvah* alluded to in the third statement, *Elokeinu*: “Hashem, we are ashamed of our deeds and repentant of our sins”. The core aspect and the most timely insistence remains the first *possuk*, not remaining silent concerning the extant *churban*, which infuses the appropriate meaning into our admittance of wrongdoing that it should have the strength of a true and internally impactful return to Hashem. In fact, the very act implied by the first *possuk*—turning to Hashem and demanding the *geulah*—is the implicit action needed for complete *teshuvah*.

RECITING SELICHOS

It is appropriate to review the *Selichos* liturgy in advance, so as to understand the meaning of its less familiar sections and poetic paragraphs.

If reciting *Selichos* at a measured pace makes it difficult to keep up with the congregation, you should interrupt your own recital whenever the *minyan* reaches the *Yud-Gimmel Middos Harachamim* (i.e., *Hashem, Hashem, Keil Rachum Vechanun*, etc.), even if you are in the middle of a paragraph. Join the congregation in this recital and then resume *Selichos* from the point of interruption.⁴⁶

If reciting *Selichos* without a *minyan*, omit the *Yud-Gimmel Middos Harachamim*.

WHEN TO STAND

Preferably, you should stand when reciting *Selichos*. If this is difficult, rise, at a minimum, to recite *Keil Melech yoshev*, the *Yud-Gimmel Middos Harachamim*, and when saying *Viduy*.

⁴⁴ Yeshayahu 62:7

⁴⁵ Tehillim 36:10

⁴⁶ See more details and sources concerning when and how to join the *minyan* in its recital while saying *Selichos* at a different pace at [#23657](http://www.asktherav.com)

The Open Aron: When the *aron* is open for special prayers, but the *sifrei Torah* remain in place, it is not an essential **requirement** to stand, though this is the common practice in order to give extra respect, and there are opinions that are *machmir*, and state it is necessary for those who can view the Torahs at this time. Practically, someone who feels weak, or the elderly, can be lenient here.⁴⁷

KRIAS HATORAH

At three points in the reading, the congregation chants the verse aloud prior to the reader: (1) “*Shuv mecharon...le’amecha.*” (2) “*Hashem, Hashem...venakeh.*” (3) “*Vesalachta...unechaltanu.*” The reader, as well as the one getting the *aliyah*, should remain silent while the congregation recites the *pesukim*, taking care to only continue (the reader—aloud, the *oleh*—quietly) once they have concluded, so that they may hear the verses being read from the Torah itself. The Rebbe’s custom when getting this *aliyah* is to begin reciting the verses with the congregation and complete them with the reader.

If the weekly parshah is read in error—as this year the fast day falls on Thursday when that portion of the Torah is normally read in shul—it does not need to be reread, even if it is brought to the attention of the congregation in the middle of the reading.

TODAY’S PARSHAH

“This is not well publicized and has been applied by very few,” the Rebbe says in 5748,⁴⁸ “But on the 17th of Tammuz, there are those who study the chapters regarding fasts from the *Neviim*, similar to the custom of saying a chapter of Tehillim specific to each day (*Shir shel Yom*) and similar; these texts are the ‘*parshah*’ of today. Now, the Torah is eternal, so even when Moshiach comes, we will include these parts of *Neviim* that discuss fast days. Because this is the ‘**Torah** of (eternal) **truth**’ and the ‘**Torah** of **light**’, the good in every aspect shines through (even within these negative passages about fast days). This is explained elsewhere⁴⁹ concerning the words ‘Yaakov and Eisav who are spoken about in the *parshah*.’ This means that we can access the good that is in these fasts as they will be transformed into days of rejoicing and *yomim tovim* (literally, ‘**good** days’) in the future. So on the contrary (learning about the fast days from the *Neviim* is not a focus on negativity, but) through learning about the temporary descent, this magnifies the happiness and yom-tov aspect.”

SHABBOS FOOD PREP

If it is necessary to taste the food that is being readied for Shabbos for the sake of accurate preparation, you may rely on those authorities that permit tasting a small quantity and then spitting it out.

⁴⁷) See more details at www.asktherav.com #22483

⁴⁸) *Sefer Hasichos*, p. 247, fn. 63

⁴⁹) in *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 20, pp. 341 ff; vol. 30, p.144 part 6; and others

MINCHAH

It is preferable to *daven* Minchah earlier, finishing before *shkiah* (8:30 pm) so that it does not run into twilight (*bein hashmoshos*). In addition to the fact that it is appropriate to *daven* Minchah before *shkiah* every day, on a fast day specifically this is the correct thing to do. In the event that someone does *daven* late, he may still conduct *Krias Hatorah* and *Maftir* even once it has reached *bein hashmoshos*.

The Torah reading of Shacharis is repeated for Minchah with the addition of *Maftir* for a fast day: *Dirshu Hashem*.

During the *Amidah*, *Aneinu* is recited by all (fasting) congregants during the blessing of *Shema Koleinu*. If it is mistakenly omitted, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

During *Chazaras Hashatz*, the *chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between the blessings of *go'al Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. The *chazzan's* priestly blessing is recited before *Sim shalom*.

The order for Minchah is as follows: 1. *Vayedaber* (*Korbanos* for Minchah) 2. *Ashrei* 3. half-*Kaddish* 4. *Vayehi binsoa* and *Krias Hatorah*, then *Maftir* and its blessings 5. *Yehalelu*, 6. half-*Kaddish* 7. *Amidah* (including *Anieinu*) and *Chazaras Hashatz* 8. *Tachanun*, the long *Avinu Malkeinu* 9. *Kaddish tiskabel* 10. *Aleinu* and *Kaddish Yasom*.

Divrei Kevushin, an address that motivates its audience toward self-improvement, are said after Minchah.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: MINCHAH WITH MOSHIACH

“Today may be the day Moshiach arrives,” the Rebbe said on a fast day.⁵⁰ “In that case we won’t be saying the fast-day liturgy in Minchah, but adding happy remarks, for in the middle of the brachah of *Shema Koleinu* we are permitted to add any personal *tefillos*.”

During that same *sichah*, the Rebbe added, “When Moshiach comes today, Minchah will be prayed without a Torah reading!”⁵¹

MAARIV & BREAK-FAST

The fast ends after Maariv at 9:04 pm.

There are various methods of calculating the time of nightfall (called *tzeis hakochavim*, when three stars are observable). Following the Alter Rebbe’s opinion to account for “smaller stars”, we generally wait some minutes after this time to say the nighttime *Shema*. But for the purpose of the fast, you may *daven* earlier, at the time detailed above, and then repeat the *Shema* sometime later.

Regarding the permissibility of marital intimacy following a fast, see the footnote.⁵²

50) Sunday, 18 Tammuz (17 Tammuz *Nidcheh*), 5751

51) And not Shacharis? Perhaps the Rebbe spoke thus because it was Minchah time. Would we still read the Torah at Shacharis if we are no longer fasting? See Hebrew footnotes for a comprehensive discussion on these topics.

52) It is permitted in the case where there is no lingering weakness from the fast. See www.asktherav.com

FRIDAY, 18 TAMMUZ, EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS

Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Pinchas*. (See more details regarding this practice in next Friday's entry.)

Candle lighting is at **8:12 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

SHABBOS PARSHAS PINCHAS, 19 TAMMUZ

On this date in 5640 (1880), was the *bris milah* of the Frierdiker Rebbe (and the seventh day from his bar mitzvah thirteen years later, in 5653 [1893]). In various *sichos*, the Rebbe speaks about the spiritual strength of the great *simchah* to commemorate this day and its redemptive effect on the time we are currently experiencing—*Bein Hametzarim*, and its connection to the final *geulah*.⁵³

SEARCHING SIMCHAH

“Those days are recalled and recurring’ spiritually,” the Rebbe says in 5745,⁵⁴ “but we live in a physical world of action (which includes practices of mourning for *Bein Hametzarim*), so we must try to find some way to give a *heter* to properly celebrate the (Frierdiker Rebbe’s) *bris milah*. Perhaps there will be a current *simchah* like a *bris, pidyan haben*, or the like—since these are celebrations that are in accord with the halachos of *Shulchan Aruch* pertaining to the Three Weeks—and we will extend that *simchah* (to include the one of the Frierdiker Rebbe).

“And we will emphasize that even though the focus of this *simchah* is the halachic and *gashmiyus* one, still, for *Yidden* and *Chassidim* who live with the Rebbe, our *Nasi*, consistently it is as if today, actually, we are celebrating the *bris* of a dynamic person, one who grows each year, advancing higher ‘from strength to strength’ in a cumulative manner—so that this year (5745), is the 106th *bris* of the (Frierdiker) Rebbe!⁵⁵ And therefore the celebration of the occasion is that many times greater!

“In rebuttal to those who may claim (‘those who seek allegations’) and take issue with such a non-required celebration—and in truth, this is a halachically-justified argument, not a pretext at all—which is why we should find an actual, halachah-sanctioned *simchah* of a *bris, pidyan haben*, or the like, and in the course of such, discuss a point of *Chassidus* originating from the *ba’al hasimchah* himself, the (Frierdiker) Rebbe, (mentioning that) he lives on and that each year reaches a higher level. And then we should continue the *farbrengen*—all this done in a way that is within the purview of the *Shulchan Aruch*. And regarding that it can be said, as is brought in *Chassidus*, that the one that places the limits on itself is not truly limited—and such can be said of the restrictions of the *Shulchan Aruch* in this case.⁵⁶

#39259.

53) See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5749 (in *Sefer Hasichos*, pp. 581 ff) and others.

54) *Sichah* of 15 Tammuz; free translation transcribed from audio.

55) This year is the 147th.

56) The Rebbe referenced this again the following Shabbos, *Sichas Parshas Balak* 5745, quoted in the Hebrew

HAFTORAH

During the Three Weeks, the *Haftorah* of every Shabbos is one of the *Tilasa D'piranusa* (three selections from the *Navi* concerning *golus* and the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*). This Shabbos, the *Haftorah* is *Divrei Yirmiyahu*.⁵⁷

POWER OF 3

In *Chassidus* it is explained that *Tilasa D'piranusa* (the three *Haftoros* of disaster) correspond to the three intellectual faculties (Chochmah, Binah and Daas) and by contrast, the *Shiva D'nechemta* (seven *Haftoros* of comfort) that follow *Tishah B'Av* until Rosh Hashanah, correspond to the seven emotional attributes (Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus).

The concept of *תלתא דפורענותא* (*Tilasa D'piranusa*) is, in its truest sense, positive. It is connected with the level of *פרעה דקדושה* (*Paroh D'kedushah*), a very great, holy light that *אתפריעו* (*ispari'u*), gushes forth; all other levels of spiritual light are revealed through this extremely high level of revelation.

THE SHABBOS EFFECT

“The melancholy aspects of the Three Weeks do not apply to Shabbos,” the Rebbe says on Shabbos during this time,⁵⁸ “because on Shabbos we must be happy. Moreover, this particular Shabbos needs to be even more joyous than others so that there shouldn't be a suspicion that any lack of happiness is due to the Three Weeks.”

This is the inner meaning of the concept: Shabbos is a taste of the future *geulah*, which is known as “*yom shekulo Shabbos*” (a time that is always [like] Shabbos). Since the *geulah* is defined as a time when no vestige of *golus* remains, so too no Shabbos may have any impression of the Three Weeks at all.

However, the above is no more than an explanation for why there cannot be any aspect that is the opposite of happiness. The reason why this Shabbos has to have even more *simchah* than others is based on the well-known adage that the redemption that follows the exile raises us to an even higher place than before the exile began...So Shabbos during the Three Weeks is a taste of Moshiach, “*yom shekulo Shabbos*”, and thus mandates an extra dose of *simchah*. This is because the idea of **this** Shabbos is that we are given extra strength (thanks to a revelation of light of the future) to transform the Three Weeks into joy and happiness. This is in line with the *psak* in *Shulchan Aruch* that it is permitted to have our meals as “the meals of Shlomo's times” (i.e., in their full splendor), as in his days “the moon was in its fullness (and glory).” This Shabbos we are given the strength to transform these days (as they were then, and even better) into joy and happiness (of the *geulah*).

On Shabbos during the Three Weeks, we have to be even more joyous than any other

section footnotes on this topic.

57) If the regular *Haftorah* of *Parshas Pinchas* is read by mistake (in some other years, it is not yet in the Three Weeks), the *Haftorah* of *Divrei Yirmiyahu* should be read next week, together with the second of the Three *Haftoros*, *Shim'u* (the two segments are consecutive in the source in *Navi*).

58) *Sichah* of *Parshas Matos-Masei* 5715. In *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pp. 358 ff.

Shabbos of the year, to remove any suspicion that anyone is practicing *aveilus* (acts of mourning, which are forbidden on Shabbos). There is a story of someone who wore non-leather clogs all the time. Unfortunately, he became an *avel* (mourner who lost a close relative). The Shabbos of the *shivah*, he asked a *sha'alah* whether he may keep wearing his clogs. The Rebbe's father (Harav Levi Yitzchak) *paskened* that he may not—so that no one should suspect that he is adhering to mourning practices on Shabbos.⁵⁹

TRANSFORMATION

From *Maor V'Shemesh*: Concerning what “the Holy Greats” say,⁶⁰ *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are exceedingly elevated. It appears to me that this is because the six days of the week (preceding the *Shabbosos*) are exceedingly low and minimized.

It is known that on Shabbos, all worlds are elevated and this (in turn) elevates the six days of the week. Hence (now, during the Three Weeks), because everything that was so minimized is brought up so high, it is understood that the *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are extremely elevated. This is unlike the rest of the *Shabbosos* during the year, when, being as the days of the week aren't as exceedingly low, the elevation isn't as high as the *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks, when all the things that were in the lowest of the low, in the valleys of the abyss, have been elevated to holiness.

BEIN HAMETZARIM MATH

The Tzemach Tzedek explains how the three *Shabbosos* of the Three Weeks have the ability to transform the negativity into positivity, according to Kabbalah:

Temporally, the Three Weeks are what the *midbar* (desert) is spatially, and representative of *golus* in general. The three *Shabbosos* during the Three Weeks are the “cure that preempts the illness”. To understand this we make a calculation that accounts the following:

Every Shabbos can be considered as two *Shabbosos* (because each Shabbos comprises two aspects) and there are three *Shabbasos* in the Three Weeks.
2 x 3 = 6

The seven days of the week during the Three Weeks are illuminated by the double *Shabbosos*.

6 x 7 = 42

It is through the Shabbos aspect of every day of the Three Weeks that we remediate the forty-two journeys of the *midbar-golus* to finally reach *Eretz Yisrael*. What does this mean? Through the *Shabbosos*, we cure the negative side of the Three Weeks.

⁵⁹) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1091

⁶⁰) Brought in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 25. There it says: (The author) was a student of the Mezritcher Maggid's students; certainly he's referring to them.

HOW TO FARBRENG

“A unique issue occurs,” says the Rebbe in 5744,⁶¹ “concerning *Yidden* who have become so involved in worldly matters, that during those special times when it is incumbent upon them to release themselves from worldly affairs and become steeped in spiritual matters, they have great difficulty doing so. This is especially with regard to feeling the pain of the descent of *golus* to the point of thirsting for the comfort of redemption...

“When we come to the period of the Three Weeks—including Shabbos, as is highlighted by the fact that from *Bereishis* until the 17th of Tammuz, the *Haftorah* is connected to the weekly *parshah*, but starting from the first Shabbos of the Three Weeks, the theme relates to the events of the current time period—it is difficult to have influence upon the above-mentioned *Yid*, that he should be aroused with feelings of pain from being in the Three Weeks, and that he should thirst to be comforted by the *geulah*. Since he is steeped in the world of business, and he sees that Hashem is making him successful and is blessing him with children, health and sustenance, he doesn’t feel like he’s lacking in anything at all...

“However, since Hashem doesn’t demand of us more than our abilities, it’s understood that, despite how difficult this is, it is still within the ability of every Jew... Since he is imbued with the knowledge and feeling that his truest existence is his *neshamah*, even when his physical matters of children, health and sustenance are not lacking, he knows and feels the extent of the pain of *golus*, especially when we are in the time period of the Three Weeks. Therefore, he will be in this state of thirsting for the comfort of redemption.

“It would seem that there’s room to question the point of discussing all this during the *farbrengen*, that there is a need for us to remember that we are in the Three Weeks, which causes pain and sadness. Is this the purpose of the *farbrengen*? Certainly, there are unique laws for how to conduct oneself during the Three Weeks. But these laws have already been written in *Shulchan Aruch*, a *sefer* that every Jew certainly owns, or at least can get hold of easily, and we should assume that every Jew acts correctly and studies the details of the laws relevant to each time period, and the *halachos* of every festival, and in the same way the laws unique to the Three Weeks.

“So, what is the purpose of discussing this topic? And even if there is a need to awaken the observance of these things, Hashem should have mercy and spare us from a *shlichus* like this, to remind Jews of an idea that is the opposite of happiness, *chas v’shalom*... Yet, on the contrary, the (Friediker) Rebbe instituted that we should *farbreng* on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, including *Shabbos Mevarchim Chodesh Av*, and it’s understood that, at the very least, we need to discuss *inyonei d’yoma* (time-relevant matters)!

“The guidance and saving grace for this is the concept of ‘Menachem Av’ (Av of Comfort), meaning we must bring up topics that bring succor, and (ultimately) the concept of the annulment of the undesirable matters of the Three Weeks, by increasing in all matters of *Yiddishkeit*, in Torah and *mitzvos*, with happiness and good-heartedness.”

61) *Roshei Devarim* from a *sichah* of *Shabbos Parshas Masei*

Pirkei Avos: In the tradition of extending the recital of the *perek* every Shabbos throughout the summer months, this week the sixth chapter of Avos is recited.⁶²

Shabbos ends at 9:20 pm.

FRIDAY, 25 TAMMUZ, EREV SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI

SHABBOS PREP

Although we hear the Torah being read in shul each Shabbos, an individual is nevertheless obligated to read each week's *parshah* for himself on a weekly basis, in the format of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*—reading each *posuk* twice and then its Aramaic translation in *Targum Onkelos* once. It is best practice to complete this reading on *erev Shabbos* after *chatzos* (halachic midday); to fulfill this obligation after the fact, however, it may be read anytime on Shabbos morning before eating the day meal, though it is better if completed before Shacharis. Today, we read *shnayim mikra* for *Parshas Matos-Masei*. It is our minhag with regard to all double *parshios* to include both *Haftoros* in this recitation.

Candle lighting is at **8:10 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

It is a mitzvah to check your pockets before Shabbos to make sure they contain no *muktzah* and to avoid carrying items in public in areas with no *eiruv*.

SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI, SHABBOS CHAZAK

26 TAMMUZ, SHABBOS MEVARCHIM MENACHEM AV

The entire Tehillim is recited early in the morning.

SING LIKE YOU MEAN IT!

“There are those who sing *Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash*,” the Rebbe remonstrated⁶³ at a Shabbos *farbrengen* during the Three Weeks, “and they do so with a feeble voice; after, they wipe the sweat from their brow and conclude that they have done their duty! Even throughout the year, we need to consider whether there is room for such conduct, but certainly during Shabbos of *Bein Hametzarim*, when extra care is demanded of us to avoid acts that show a lack of *simchah*, so that no one will think that we are practicing *aveilus* on Shabbos. (There are a number of stories that prove how careful we must be.)

“Therefore, an extra measure of joy is required of us today than on any other Shabbos of the year—though every Shabbos is referred to as ‘*yom simchaschem*—the day of your rejoicing’. Only once Shabbos is over, if we are, G-d forbid, not yet redeemed

⁶²) We avoid the mention of Hashem's name in the incomplete Torah verses mentioned in *Pirkei Avos*. This week, it applies in two places, both in Mishnah 10. We read, “*Ad ya'avor amcha Hashem...*” and “*machon leshivticha Hashem, mikdash Hashem...*”

⁶³) From the *Roshei Devarim* of *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*, 5742