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לשבת

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HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

Moshe Rabbeinu explained the Torah “באר היטב”, in seventy languages. The message, explains K’sav Sofer, is that under all circumstances, not only in the *midbar* or in Eretz Yisrael, but even if we are in *galus*, we must always learn !

Since Tish'a B'Av falls on *motz'ei* Shabbos this year, there is no *seuda hamafsekkes* as in other years; rather, we have a regular elaborate *se'uda shlishis*. It is preferable not to invite guests to *se'uda shlishis*, unless one always eats it with company, in which case refraining from having company would be considered a public expression of *availus* (MB 552: 23). We must be sure to stop eating a few minutes before sunset (8:02 PM), unlike other *se'udos shlishis* when we may continue eating after dark. Ram" a writes (553:2) that when Tish'a B'Av falls on *motz'ei* Shabbos, we remove our shoes after *bar'chu*, because one is not allowed to have any signs of *availus* on Shabbos, while the *shliach tzibur* removes them before *bar'chu*, after saying *baruch hamavdil* (without Hashem's name), so that he should not show any signs of *availus* on Shabbos. Poskim write (Moadim U'zmanim 7:256), that the Ram" a mentions only the removing of shoes because their *minhag* was to wear weekday clothing on Shabbos, but according to our *minhag*, to wear special Shabbos clothing, we must also change into already-worn weekday clothing, if we *daven ma'ariv* after *tzais hakochavim* (Shevet Halaivi 7:77). We do not say *havdalah* on *motz'ei* Shabbos after *ma'ariv*, and before reading Eicha we say *borai m'orai ha'aish*. Women should be careful to be *yotzei* with the *b'racha* from the *shliach tzibur*, and not say the *b'racha* themselves (Riv'vos Ephrayim 3:370); if they are not in Shul, their husband should not say the *b'racha* in Shul, but should wait to say it at home and be *motzi* his wife (Shmiras Shabbos 62:note 78 in name of R' Sh. Z. Auerbach). After the fast is over, we say *havdalah* on wine or grape juice, but only with the *b'rachos* of *hagafen* and *hamavdil*. If a sick person is obligated to eat during the *ta'anis*, he must remember to say *havdalah* before he starts eating. Normally, on *erev* Tish'a B'Av there is a prohibition to learn Torah, as on Tish'a B'av itself, starting from *chatzos*, and Ram" a's opinion is therefore that Pirkei Avos should not be said this Shabbos. However, MB (553:10) is lenient and holds that on Shabbos one should not be strict about this *halacha*, and one should learn that which he normally does. On Tish'a B'Av itself there are limitations on what material of Torah one is allowed to learn; nevertheless, the obligation to learn Torah is in place, obviously restricted to the permitted Torah material. Regardless, one is not allowed to read things that will distract his mind from *availus* like newspapers or magazines, science and general history books, and although after *chatzos* one is allowed to look at a book, etc. one would not be allowed to study even then, and even more so if one enjoys reading or studying them (Aruch Hashulchan YD 384:9). As opposed to other fast days, when one is allowed to rinse his mouth with water, if the bad taste makes him uncomfortable, on Tish'a B'Av one is not supposed to even rinse their mouth, unless it will cause great distress. Even then, only water is allowed, and not mouthwash, and one should be careful to bend down while rinsing, so that no water is swallowed. Medicines that have a bitter taste may be swallowed without water. Washing in the morning is permitted only until the end of the fingers, and the same applies when leaving the washroom. When cooking, if one has to wash the food under water, it is permitted. Although the use of perfumes and creams on Tish'a B'Av is not permitted, deodorant is OK. Sitting on a chair is permitted only after *chatzos*, and doing work also should be postponed till after *chatzos*. Even housework, as well as cooking for after the *ta'anis*, should preferably not be done till after *chatzos*, but what is needed to feed the children is permitted even before. There is a custom to clean up and straighten the house after *chatzos*, in order to strengthen our belief in the coming of Mashiach, because it is written that on the afternoon of Tish'a B'Av the Mashiach is born, may we see him soon in our days. One is not allowed to greet his friend on Tish'a B'Av, and if someone who is not aware of the prohibition does greet him, we answer in a low tone. One is allowed to give a blessing to his friend, and therefore it is permitted to wish Mazal Tov, and even shake someone's hand, because it is not considered a greeting. One may not bring a present to a *bris*, or even give his word that he is going to do so, because that is considered a greeting. כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה בשמחתה. One should limit his speech during this day, and also refrain from walking and joining groups of people, because this causes laughter and lightheadedness, and one should be careful from showing happiness, laughter and any type of mockery; an exception to this would be taking part in a *bris milah* after *chatzos*, when it is proper to be happy with the *mitzvah*.

THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ... By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (Y'shayahu 1:1-27)

This week's haftara, which is taken from the very beginning of *sefer* Y'shayahu, is always read the Shabbos before Tish'a B'Av. The scathing rebuke delivered by the navi contains some of the strongest *tochacha* in all of Tanach. The evil actions of the Jewish people are described in many ways, and ultimately the navi uses Sodom as the comparison. The navi first compares the punishment that the Jewish people deserved to that of the city of Sodom, i.e., total destruction: כסדם היינו לעמורה דמינו. It is only through Hashem's infinite mercy that the Jewish people are spared this utter destruction. What have the people done to deserve such a drastic punishment? The navi seems to answer the question in the very next *pasuk*: שמעו דבר ה' קציני סדם. Apparently, their actions were so similar to those of the people of Sodom did that the navi saw fit to call them קציני סדם! The navi chose the people of Sodom for comparison because they represent the epitome of evil. The S'forno comments in *parashas* Lech Lecha, for example, that despite the wickedness of the people of Canaan, as chronicled throughout Chumash, Avraham Avinu still preferred to live amongst them rather than in Sodom. The *mefarshim* enumerate the many sins of Sodom, including idolatry, immorality, robbery, and as we know well from the many Midrashim we heard as children, their horrible treatment of the indigent. The navi Y'chezkel (16:49-50) adds one more to the long list: haughtiness. The Malbim explains that this final sin can be seen as the source of all the others. The people of Sodom had no need to rob people; they had plenty of wealth. Nor did they have a pressing need to hoard for the future; their land was fertile as well as rich in natural resources, and they enjoyed a peaceful existence. But their system of justice and overall life philosophy, motivated by their haughtiness, caused them to commit their evil acts. Let us all use these days leading up to Tish'a B'Av to reflect on our daily lives and correct them so that we may merit the promise of the navi: ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה.

