9 of Ab: Reaching a state of grief

Tish'a be-Ab is the Jewish National Day of Mourning. This year, it will be observed from Monday night July 15th until Tuesday night July 16th. Besides fasting, during Tish'a be-Ab we behave as if we were mourners grieving for a loved one who just passed away. To express (or reach) an emotional state of grief we avoid doing certain activities. These activities are divided into two categories: 1. Activities related to 'pleasure' . 2. Activities related to 'joy'.

Today we will review some examples of the first category.

WASHING

Same as Yom Kippur, taking a shower, bathing or washing for pleasure is forbidden on Tish'a be-Ab. However, if a part of the body is unclean we can wash it.

Washing our mouth is not permitted on Tish'a be-Ab. Except in a situation of great distress. In such a case one should bend the head downward to avoid swallowing any liquid (Rabbi Obadya Yosef).

It is permitted to use baby wipes to clean one's face, eyes, hands, etc. because it is not considered washing. Theoretically we could wash our hands normally in the morning for Netilat Yadaim because we do it for a Mitzva and not for pleasure. The standard Sephardic custom, however, is to wash only the fingers.

A woman preparing the food for the night after the fast can wash her hands.

SIKHA

Using creams for pleasure or comfort is not permitted. Medical creams or oils are permitted. Using deodorant is permitted.

LEATHER SHOES are considered a luxurious item so during Tish'a be-Ab we don't wear leather shoes. Other leather items, like a belt or a leather Kippa are permitted.

MARITAL RELATIONS are suspended on Tish'a beAb as if it was Nidda time. If the Mikveh night falls on the eve of Tish'a be-Ab—this coming Monday night—Mikveh has to be postponed for the following night .

May we all soon rejoice for Binyan Yerushalayim! AMEN

NEW UPDATED LINK FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Click here to listen to Dr. Jessica Jacob's lecture:

This presentation was given by Dr. Jessica Jacob's MD/OBGYN in the Mashadi Jewish community before Yom Kippur, 2010. Most information is relevant for Tish'a be-Ab as well. The most important difference is that on Tish'a be-Ab, when exempted from the fast, one can eat normally and does not have to eat in small portions, as it is required on Yom Kippur.