

SPECIAL DAYS IN MENACHEM AV

Menachem Av 1/July 13/Friday
Rosh Chodesh

"When Av comes in, we minimize happiness" (Taanis 26B)

"In the nine days from Rosh Chodesh Av on we should try to make Siyumim." (Likutei Sichos Vol. XIV: p. 147)

Mountains emerged above the receding Flood waters (BeReishis 8:5, Rashi)

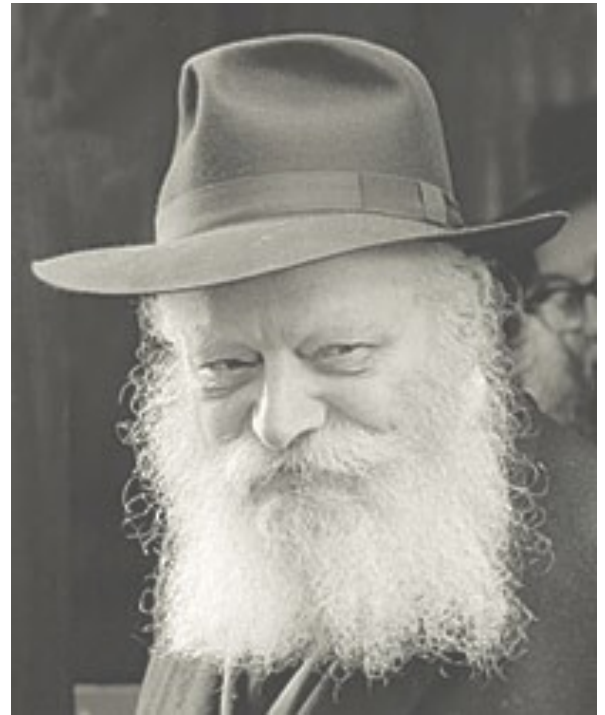
Plague of frogs in Mitzrayim. (Seder HaDoros)

Yartzeit of **Aharon HaKohen**, 2489 [1312 BCE], the only Yartzeit recorded in the Torah, (BaMidbar 33:38) (in **Parshas Masaei**, read every year on the Shabbos of the week of his Yartzeit)

Ezra and his followers arrived in Yerushalayim, 3413 [457 BCE]. (Ezra 7:9)

In Av 5331 [430 BCE] there was a debate between Chananya ben Azur and Yirmiyahu. Chananya prophesized that Nevuchadnetzer and his armies would soon leave Eretz Yisroel, and all the stolen vessels from the Beis Hamikdash would be returned from Bavel along with all those who were exiled. Yirmiyahu explained, that he too wished that this would happen, but the prophesy is false. Only if the Jews do Teshuvah can the decree be changed. Yirmiyahu also said that in that year Chananya will die, since he spoke falsely in the name of Hashem. And so it happened. (This occurred around seven years before the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash) (Yirmiyahu 28).

In the eleventh year of the reign of Tzidkiyahu, on Rosh Chodesh Av, the year of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, Yechezkal said a prophesy, that the kingdom of Tzur will be destroyed by Nevuchadnetzar King of Babylon, because they celebrated Jerusalem's destruction. (Yechezkal 26)

**Menachem Av 2/July 14/Shabbos**

Titus commenced battering operations against the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, 3829 [70].

The **Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe** arrived in Eretz Yisrael, on his historic visit, 5689 [1929].

Menachem Av 4/July 16/Monday

Nechemiah began building a wall around Yerushalayim, 3413 [444 BCE] (Nechemiah 6:15).

Yartzeit of **R. Menachem Azariah of Fano**, the **RaMa MiPano**, author of Asarah Maamaros and Alfasi Zuta, Halachist and Kabbalist, cited extensively in Chasidus, 5385 [1625].

Menachem Av 5/July 17/Tuesday
Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchak Luria**, the **Ari Zal**, 5332 [1572]. He passed away at thirty-six, in Tzfas.

"... All Israel accepted him as the final Posek in all matters of the hidden parts of the Torah and its secrets, there is no room for argument and the Halachah is

as the words of the Ari Zal" (Kovetz Lubavitch, Vol. II: p. 61)

Yartzeit of **R. Gedalyah Hayun**, head of the Yerushalayim Kabbalists, founder and head of the Kabbalists Yeshivah, Beis E-il, 5510 [1750]. The Baal Shem Tov's brother-in-law, R. Avraham Gershon Kitover studied in this Yeshiva.

Yartzeit of **R. Chaim of Krasna**, student of the Baal Shem Tov, 5553 [1793].

Menachem Av 6/July 18/Wed

Nevuchadnetzar occupied the First Beis HaMikdash, 3338 [423 BCE].

Menachem Av 9/July 21/Shabbos Chazon
(Fast is deferred to Sunday)

Reb Hillel of Paritch would say in the name of R. Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev: "Chazon" means vision; on Shabbos Chazon, HaShem shows every Jew a vision of the Third Beis Hamikdash".

"...Appropriate with the end of the Haftarah of Shabbos Chazon, "Tzion in justice will be redeemed and its returning with righteousness" (Yishayahu 1:27): Justice, 'Mishpat', is Torah (Likutei Torah, Devarim) and righteousness, 'Tzedakah', is all of the Mitzvos, which includes the Mitzvah of Tzedakah, we should, in these days add in the study of Torah and doing Mitzvos, especially the Mitzvah of Tzedakah." (Sicha, Shabbos Chazon, Av 9, 5751a)

The Rebbe would hold a farbrengen on this Shabbos and advised that farbrengens spreading simcha with Ahavas Yisroel be held on this Shabbos

Moshiach born on the day of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash (Yerushalmi Berachos 2:4, Eichah Rabah 1:51). This Day, Shabbos, reveals only the positive aspects of the day that Moshiach was born. (Sicha, Shabbos Chazon, Av 9, 5748)

Yartzeit of **R. Yaakov Yitzchak, the "Chozeh" of Lublin**, author of Divrei Emes, 5575 [1815].

There is a vort of the Chozeh's student that my father, Rabbi Menachem Shmuel Dovid Raichik, OB"m, often repeated which he heard from the Rebbe, Sukkos 5716/1955. In Tehillim we say (Psalm 126), "Hashem has done great things for these (the Yidden). Hashem has done great things for us: we were joyful." When the Geulah will come the nations of the world will ask "Why does Hashem do such great things for the Jewish people?" The Yidden will respond, "Hashem was so great with us - because we were always joyful." It is well known how much the Chozeh did to try to bring Moshiach in his times.

M. Av 10/July 22/ Sunday
Fast of Tisha B'Av (deferred)

Commemorates the destruction of the first and second **Beis Hamikdash** and many other tragedies that happened on this day.

The Exodus generation condemned to die in the desert, 2449. [1312 BCE] (Devarim 1:35; Taanis 26b)

Nevuzaradan set fire to the Beis HaMikdash 3175 [586 BCE].

The **Romans** destroyed the Second Beis HaMikdash, 3829 [69]. The Romans plowed the site of the Beis HaMikdash to convert it into

a Roman colony, Aelia Capatolina, 71 [3831] (Taanis 26b).

Betar, last independent outpost under Bar Kochba fell to the Romans, 3895 [135]. (Taanis 26b)

Edward I of England ordered the expulsion of all Jews, 5050 [1290].

Ferdinand of Spain expelled the Jews, 5066 [1492].

3,000 Jews perished in the **Chmielnicki massacres**, 5408 [1648].

Deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto started, 5702 [1942].

Birth of **Yisachar** son of Yaakov Avinu, 2196, and his Yartzeit, in 2318 (Midrash Tadshe).

Yartzeit of **R. Dovid Furkas**, student of the Baal Shem Tov, 5532 [1772].

Beis HaMikdash destroyed by a fire started the preceding afternoon, (Taanis 29a).

M. Av 11/July 23/Monday

Yartzeit of **R. Hillel of Paritch**, Chasid of the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek, author of Pelach HaRimon, Shabbos Nachamu 5624 [1864].

He never saw the Alter Rebbe but he did hear a D'var Torah from him. Reb Hillel tried to meet the Alter Rebbe, as he had a question for him on the Tractate Erchin (discussing the evaluation of things for the Bais Hamikdash). Every time he came to meet the Alter Rebbe the Alter Rebbe wasn't there.

Reb Hillel decided to find out where the Alter Rebbe planned to be one time. He went

early and hid in the room so that when the Alter Rebbe would come in he would be able to speak to him. When the Alter Rebbe entered the room he said, "If a young man has a question on Tractate Erchin, he has to evaluate himself." Hearing this, Reb Hillel fainted. When he came to, the Alter Rebbe had already left.

It is known that Reb Hillel Paritcher was exceedingly scrupulous in his performance of mitzvohs throughout his life. As the Rebbe explained - because of what Reb Hillel heard from the Alter Rebbe he constantly evaluated and reevaluated himself regarding his observance of the mitzvos. (Likutei Sichos Vol 22, pp. 171-172)

The **Alter Rebbe** left Peterburg for Liadi, after his second imprisonment, 5561 [1801].

M. Av 12/July 24/Tuesday
Disputation between the **Ramban** and the apostate Pablo Christiani, 5023 [1263].

Wedding of the **Alter Rebbe** and the **Rebbitzen Sterna**, 5520 [1760].

The **Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe** and Agudas Chasidei Chabad purchased **770 Eastern Parkway**, World Lubavitch Headquarters, 5700 [1940].

M. Av 13/July 25/Wednesday

Yartzeit of **R. Nasan Shapiro of Cracow**, Kabbalist, author of **Megaleh Amukos**, 5393 [1633].

Yartzeit of **Sir Moses Montefiore**, outstanding philanthropist, 5645 [1885]. In 1839, Sir Moses visited the Chabad community in Chevron (then the Chabad center in Eretz Yisrael) at the community's invitation. He and

Lady Judith were given lifetime seats in the Chabad Shul.

M. Av 14/July 26/Thursday
Erev Tu B'Av -
No Tachanun at Mincha

The **Alter Rebbe** settled in Liadi, 5561 [1801].

M. Av 15/July 27/ Friday
Tu B'Av- No Tachanun

" . . . There were no days more joyous than the Fifteenth of Av and Yom HaKipurim" [Taanis, 26B]

"In connection with Tu B'Av, we should make Farbrengens everywhere with great joy, to gather, speak Divrei Torah, make Siyumim, and make good decisions to add in Torah, Mitzvos and Tzedakah and all good things. (Sichah, Shabbos Chazon, 5751)

The **last of the Exodus** generation stopped dying in the desert; HaShem resumed speaking to Moshe Rabeinu. (Ta'anis 30b).

Intertribal marriage permitted to post-exodus generations (Taanis 30b).

Permission was given to the tribe of **Binyamin** to marry into other tribes, saving them from extinction (Shoftim 21:21; Ta'anis 30b).

King Hoshea restored pilgrimage to Yerushalayim, removing road-blocks put by King Yeravam. (Ta'anis 30b)

"**Wood Bringing Day**", observed as a holiday by Jews who brought wood contributions to the Beis HaMikdash, the last day of cutting wood for the Mizbeach, "The Day of Breaking the Axes" (Taanis 30b).

The **Romans** permitted the burial of Jews killed at **Betar** in the Bar Kochba rebellion, 3898 [138] (Ta'anis 30b); At that time the Chachamim added the Brachah, "HaTov Ve-Ha-Meitiv" to the Birkas HaMazon.

Wedding of **Rebbitzen Chayah Sarah**, daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe, with **R. Aharon Alexanderov of Shklov**, 5586 [1826]. They were the parents of Rebbitzen Rivkah, the Rebbe MaHa-RaSh's wife. R. Aharon printed the first Torah Or, in Shklov.

M. Av 16/July 28/Shabbos
Shabbos Nachamu

The **Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe** left Eretz Yisrael for the United States, 5629 [1929].

M. Av 17/July 29/Sunday.

Arab riots in Chevron; sixty seven Jews were murdered, among them almost the entire Slonim family, who were descendents of the Mittlerer Rebbe's daughter Menuchah Rochel, and the Jewish community (including the central Chabad Community of Eretz Yisrael) was forced to move to Yerushalayim, 5689 [1929].

The Friediker Rebbe was on the ship coming to the United States, he was informed of the riots and destruction in Chevron, where he had visited just the previous week. The Rebbe fell seriously ill from this news, on the ship there was a Doctor Wallach, a German Jew, founder of Shaeri Tzedek Hospital who assisted and cured the Rebbe. Our Rebbe at a farbrengen related a story that after the Friediker Rebbe got well, Dr. Wallach went into Yechidus, and asked for a Tikkun. The Friediker Rebbe asked him why he needs this Tikkun and he replied that since he was on the ship he feels responsible for the Rebbe

falling ill. Hashem wouldn't have made the Rebbe sick without a sure cure in sight, since the Rebbe is a Nasi Yisrael, a leader of Klal Yisroel, and Klal Yisroel needs him, so he would not be able to be sick with no cure. So, he feels responsible and is asking a Tikkun from the Friediker Rebbe.

The Rebbe explained the lesson of this story. Many times we feel great that Hashem gave us the Zechus to help someone in need, but what we must feel is that possibly the reason for this person needing help is only to give us the opportunity to do Chesed, as the Medrash quotes "If everyone were rich, with who would you be able to do Chessed?" So, sometimes our thoughts must be, if not for us maybe this person would not need help. (Likutei Sichos, vol. 30, pg. 67)

M. Av 18/July 30/Monday

The **Ner Maaravi** was extinguished in the Beis HaMikdash (Megilas Taanis, concluding chapter).

Yartzeit of **R. Yaakov Culi**, author of MeAm Loez, 5492 [1732]. He also edited and assembled the Sefarim, Mishneh LaMelech on the Rambam's Mishneh Torah [with his own explanatory comments in brackets] and Perashas Derachim, of his teacher R. Yehudah Rosanes after the latter's passing.

M. Av 19/July 31/Tuesday

Yartzeit of **Shimon Sholom Kalish, Rabbi Shimon** of Amshinov in 5715 (1954). My father, Rabbi Raichik, OB"m, was sent to Otvosk by the Amshinover Rebbe with his recommendation, without which he would not have been accepted in the Lubavitch Yeshiva.

During WWII R. Shimon of Amshinov traveled to Vilna and then Shanghai. He encouraged the use of Japanese Visas. The Rebbe Rayatz said that if communication is cut off to the Rebbe due to the war the bochurim should seek the Amshinover Rebbe's advice and follow what he says. He passed away in New York and was buried in Teveri, next to the talmidim of the Maggid. The Rebbe went to *menachem ovel* his son (comfort the mourner) at his home in Brooklyn.

M. Av 20/August 1/Wednesday

Yartzeit of **R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson**, father of the Rebbe, Rav of Yeketrinislav, who passed away in exile in Alma Ata, 5704 [1944]. He had been exiled by the Russian government for his activities in spreading Yiddishkeit.

Of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's last hours we have this eye-witness account: A friend and I were privileged to serve him, passing all of Tuesday night at his bedside. We heard his lips murmur ceaselessly through his voice made no sound. Suddenly, he stirred, opened his eyes and asked for water to be brought for him to wash his hands. This was done, and taking the water, he said: "It is time to get ready to cross to the other side." These were the last words he uttered.

The next day, Wednesday, 20 Menachem Av, he continued to decline and his sufferings reached a new intensity, but his lips never ceased their murmuring. One of those present bent down near to him hoping to make something of the broken phrases and the sighs. Thus much he heard: " 'And Thy footsteps were not known...' Ayl the footsteps of Mashiach...the

footsteps of Mashiach..." (Days in Chabad p. 246).

M. Av 21/August 2/Thursday

Yartzeit of **R. Aharon Rokeach of Belz**, Chasidic leader, 5717 [1957]. See letters of the Previous Rebbe, (Vol. 5, pgs. 326-327, footnotes 329, Vol. 6, pg. 26, and Vol. 14, pg. 371), about the Friediker Rebbe's involvement trying to save R' Aharon during WWII. (Vol. 8, pgs. 187-189) The Rebbe inquires from Chassidim, how R' Aharon is feeling, and how he settled in Eretz Yisroel. (Vol. 14, pgs. 392-393) Rosh Hashanah letter bentching R' Aharon that the Rebbe sent to him, and requesting a Brochah from R' Aharon in return.

R. Mordechai b. Hillel, famed Talmudist, author of the Mordechai, perished in Nuremberg with his wife and five children in the Rindfliesch massacres, 5058 [1298].

M. Av 22/August 3/Friday

Yartzeit of **R. Meir of Premyshlan**, Chasidic leader, 5537 [1777]. (See Likutei Diburim Vol. 2, 25 Shevat 5696, 1936 part 3, chapter 3. In the English Version Vol. 2, pgs. 205-207) The Rebbe states that known story of R' Meir Premyshlan and his comment "If a man is bound up on high, he does not fall below, Meir is bound up on high and that's why he can go up and down a slippery hill."

M. Av 23/August 4/

Shabbos Mivorchim Elul

M. Av 24/Aug. 12/Sunday

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Meisles**, Chasid of the Alter Rebbe, head of the Kahal of Vilna, 5609 [1840]. In 1816, he moved to Eretz Yisrael, and in 1823, became one of the heads of the Chabad community and Kollel Chabad, in

Chevron. He died at ninety and is buried in Chevron.

M. Av 25/August 6/Monday

The Alter Rebbe leaves Liadi on Erev Shabbos Mevarchim Elul, because of the advancing French Army under the lead of Napoleon, and the Alter Rebbe did not want to be under Napoleon's rule.

Yartzeit of **R. Yisochor Dov of Zlotchov**, student of the Mezeritcher Magid, author of Bas Eini, 5555 [1795].

M. Av 26/August 7/Tuesday

The **Tzemach Tzedek** left Petersburg after the conference, in 5603/1843, that the Russian government convened to restructure the established way of Jewish education and of the Rabbinate and other issues. This conference lasted many months. The Tzemach Tzedek was steadfast against any change and was arrested 22 times. At one point he was told that his conduct was a act of insurgency against the Czar. He replied, "One who rebels against the king forfeits his life in this world. On the other hand, one who rebels against the kingdom of Heaven forfeits his soul. Which of them is the most grave?!" (HaYom Yom, 23rd of Cheshvan)

After the conference he was asked how he could put himself in such danger, what would be with the Chassidim. The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "(A) I have my children, and (B) the unity of Chassidim will keep them until Moshiach." (Sicha, Nissan 13, 5726/1966).

Yahrzeit of **HaRav HaChasid R. Meir Ashkenazi**, Rav of Shanghai in 5714 (1954). Rabbi Ashkenazi was sent to the Jewish community of Shanghai to serve as Rav in the 1920s by the Previous Rebbe. In 1941, when the refugees of

World War II arrived in Shanghai, he and his wife did everything for them.

Many stories are told about the endless dedication which he had to help all the yeshiva bochurim and refugees, no matter which yeshiva or town they came from. Hashem made it that R. Ashkenazi was in Shanghai for many years, which enabled him to be of great aid to all. The Lubavitcher bochurim had less than everyone else, and my father (who ran the Yeshiva) was in the Rav's house to report to him almost every day about the conditions of the yeshiva, physically and spiritually. Any telegrams were signed "Ashkenazi-Tmimim). A story told by Rabbi Chaim Bukiet, o.b.m.: One day a member of the local Jewish community came to Rabbi Ashkenazi and said that a very distinguished rabbi had appeared in his dream the past night and had asked why doesn't he take care of his children. Rabbi Ashkenazi showed the man a picture of the Previous Rebbe and the man recognized the Rebbe as the rabbi in his dream. So Rabbi Ashkenazi explained that the dream meant that the man should take care of his children - the Lubavitcher bochurim of the Yeshiva.

M. Av 28/Aug 9/Thursday

Moshe Rabeinu came down after his second ascent to Har Sinai, 2448 [1313 BCE] (Bava Basra 121A, Rashbam).

M Av 30/August 11/Shabbos First Day Rosh Chodesh Elul

We start saying "L'Dovid HaShem Ori" at Shacharis and Minchah.

Elul 1/August 12/Sunday Second Day Rosh Chodesh Elul

We start blowing the Shofar.

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The Nine Days & Tishah B'Av

FAST DEFERRED TO SUNDAY, Av 10, July 22

From Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av until after Tishah B'Av we don't buy or make new clothes or shoes, even to wear after Tishah B'Av.

We don't do house construction or improvements, except to remedy a danger; we don't do house painting.

We don't eat meat (or chicken) or drink wine (or grape juice), from Rosh Chodesh onward. On Shabbos and at a Seudas Mitzvah (Bris, Pidyon Haben) it is permitted.

After Rosh Chodesh, it's forbidden to wash the whole body, even in cold water.

Swimming is forbidden. If there's a reason for a bath or shower, (I.e. a woman going to the Mikveh, a worker who got dirty, or one who needs to for medical reasons) it's permitted.

We don't wear freshly laundered clothes during the Nine Days. It's a good idea to prepare clothes to wear before Rosh Chodesh by wearing them briefly. It is customary not to wash clothes or linens, even to be worn after Tishah B'Av.

We may wash diapers and soiled baby clothes.

Shabbos Matos /Maasei

Av 2/July 14

On Erev Shabbos Matos/Masaei, July 13th (and also Erev Shabbos Chazon) we prepare as for any other Shabbos. We may wash our face, hands, feet and head in hot water in honor of Shabbos. Those whose custom is to go to the Mikveh on Erev Shabbos may do so. We wear Shabbos clothes and observe no customs of mourning on Shabbos.

Shabbos Chazon

Av 9/July 21

This Shabbos is similar to the previous Shabbos. There are no customs of mourning, except for abstaining from marital relations, unless Friday night is the night of the going to the Mikveh. We wear Shabbos clothes and it's like a regular Shabbos. The Rebbe would demand that we should be B'Simcha, since it's the day that Moshiach was born.

We don't say Tzidkoscha at Mincha. We don't say Pirke Avos. The Rebbe encouraged us to do our daily shiurim of Rambam and Chitas before Midday.

We can eat meat or drink wine until sunset; at sunset we stop ALL eating.

The Fast

Av 10/ July 21-22

On Motzei Shabbos, change out of your leather shoes when the Chazan says "Barchu". (He changes before Barchu, but first he says, "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol".) If you aren't in Shul, say, "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol, and take off your leather shoes right after Shabbos.

We take the Paroches off the Aron Kodesh. After Shemoneh Esrei we say Kadish Shaleim with Tiskabel. We dim the lights and read Megillas Eichah. We don't say "Veyehi Noam" but we say "V'ata Kodosh" followed by Kadish Shaleim with out Tiskabel.

We don't say Havdalah, except to say the Brachah, "Borei Meorei Ha-eish" Try to say it before Eichah. In which we read "He placed me in darkness..."(3:6). Men who forgot to say "Ata chonantanu" in Shemoneh Esrei, or women who don't Daven Maariv must say "Boruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol." We don't say Veyitein Lecho.

The Restrictions

Five principal restrictions apply to the night and day of Tishah B'Av: eating and drinking, washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes and marital relations. A couple should conduct themselves as they would during the Nidah period.

Pregnant or nursing women fast; a person feeling ill should consult a Rav.

We can't wash, even with cold water. In the morning and after using the bathroom, wash your fingers until the knuckles. (We may wash dirt off our hands.) We can't rinse our mouth. Oil, soap or cosmetics on the skin are forbidden, except for medical purposes.

We can't wear leather or partly leather shoes; rubber or canvas shoes are permitted.

We only study Torah that deals with the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, or mourning: Megilas Eichah and its commentaries, laws of Tishah B'Av and mourning in Shulchan Aruch, the tragic parts or Yirmiyahu and the third chapter of Moed Katan, etc.

It's customary to sit on a chair lower than three Tefachim, (about nine inches) until after midday. We don't say "Good Morning" or "Hello." (If a person who doesn't know the law greets you, answer softly, so you don't hurt his feelings.)

We don't say the Brochah, "She'asah Li Kol Tzarki" (the Brochah for shoes). We don't wear Tallis or Tefillin at Shachris, but at Minchah.

At Shachris we say Kinos after we put away the Sefer Torah. After Kinos we say Ashrei and U'va Letzion leaving out the posuk V'zois Brisi, followed by Kadish Shaleim without Tiskabel. Then Aleinu, skipping shir shel Yom and Ein Kelokeinu. No Tehillim is said. After Davening, we read Eichah on our own.

We don't do any work until midday. We don't take pleasure walks or smoke.

Chitas may be learned after mid-day., Rambam after the fast.

Mincha is davened while wearing Tallis and Rashi Tefillin. We say Shma and finish what was omitted in Shacharis (Shir Shel Yom,, Ein Kelokeinu and Tehillim) then begin Mincha. Then Krias HaTorah and Haftarah. We add Nacheim and Aneinu in Shemoneh Esrei. After Mincha we put on Rabbenu Tam Tefillin.

After The Fast

After the fast, wash your hands three times, as you would in the morning, without a Brochah.

We make regular Havdalah on wine without the Brachos for fire and spices) and drink the wine.

We say Kiddush Levanah (preferably after changing into leather shoes, washing our face, saying havdala and eating something, ONLY IF we can do this and still say it with a Minyan.)

Those that need to make Havdalah at home should say kiddush Levana with a minyan before going home.

NOTE: One may not eat before Havdalah.

We don't eat meat or drink wine (except for Havdalah) tonight. Since the fast was deferred to Tenth this year, washing clothes and showering are permitted after the fast.

This is a very brief summary of the laws of Tishah B'Av. Consult a Rav for special circumstances.

CHOF AV -Yartzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok - the Father of the Rebbe

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe was born on Nisan 18, 1878, in the small town of Padabrianka, near Homel, White Russia. His father, Reb Boruch Shneur, a Chasid of the Rebbe MaHaRaSH, named his son after his own father who had been Rav of that town and had passed away at the early age of forty four.

Reb Boruch Shneur's grandfather, R. Boruch Sholom, was eldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek, third Rebbe of Chabad.

"From his earliest years," writes the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (his cousin and Mechutan), "Rabbi Levi Yitzchok showed extraordinary brilliant intellectual talents."

His published works—unfortunately only a tiny portion of his literary output—attest to the breadth of his erudition in all branches of Torah and to his profundity in original Torah thought.

He received Semichah from twelve of the greatest Torah authorities of his time, including the famous Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, Rav of Brisk, and Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Meislsh, Rav of Lodz, who expressed them-

selves enthusiastically about his scholarship and other great qualities.

In 1900, he married Rebbitzin Chanah, daughter of R. Meir Shlomo Yanovsky. At his father-in-law's home in Nikolayev, R. Levi Yitzchok spent ten years in intensive Torah study eighteen hours a day.

He would study each night until 5:00 am, when he would read the Shema in Tefillin and lie down for a short rest. By 9:00 am he would already have finished his prayers with the regular Minyan.

In Nikolayev his eldest son, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was born.

In his early twenties, he was drawn by the Rebbe RaShaB into communal work. From 1902 on, he participated in all meetings of communal leaders, and campaigned to provide Matzos for Jewish soldiers in the Far East during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5.

The Rebbe RaShaB considered him one of his three greatest Chassidim about whom he would say, "with these three I can be proud in this world and the next". (The other two were Rabbi Mendel Chein,

Rav of Niezhin, who died a martyr's death at the hand of Denikin's anti-Semitic "White" troops in 1919, and Rabbi Shneur Zalman Schneerson, son of Rabbi Leib, Rav of Velizh).

A sign of the high regard the Rebbe RaShaB had for him was that he sent him, when he was eighteen, several years before his marriage, to check the Mikvaos in Germany. The prominent Rabbis of Germany were impressed with the young Rav's intellect and erudition and presented him with a gold watch and chain as a token of their esteem.

It was a critical time for Russian Jews, including those of Yekatrinoslav. Government-backed pogroms had killed hundreds of Jewish victims and destroyed Jewish stores and homes, ruining their economic mainstay. This was a direct cause of the mass emigration of the Polish and Russian Jews to Western Europe and America.

It also contributed to the spread and secular ideologies among young Jews in search for a solution to the Jewish plight.

When Jews needed strong leadership and encouragement, the choice of the Yekatrinoslav Chasidic community leaders fell on R. Levi Yitzchok.

The Rebbe RaShaB strongly encouraged him to accept the position and he became Rav at thirty one in 1909. It was his first and only rabbinical post and he occupied the position for over thirty years –as last Rav of Yekatrinoslav, under the communist regime. [Today, Yekatrinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk), has a Rav, R. Shmuel Kaminsky, sent in 1990 by the Lubavitcher Rebbe.]

He immediately threw himself into the problems of the community. Discovering that the Mikveh for women was no longer usable, he called a meeting to discuss plans for a new one. The community leaders complained that they were unable to afford such a costly project.

The young new Rav rose, took off the expensive new frock coat he had donned for the first time in honor of his new position and declared: "Take this expensive coat as a beginning for the building fund of the Mikveh". The leaders immediately decide to find the financial means for a superlative Mikveh.

R. Levi Yitzchok conducted communal affairs proudly and fearlessly, allowing nothing to interfere with his duties.

"An exceptionally good-natured person", as the previous Rebbe describes him, he was blessed with a rare talent for clear analysis of any situation. These qualities made his adjudication of disputes according to the Torah-law (Din Torah) famous. He was respected and

beloved by the entire city, Jews and non-Jews.

In most large Russian cities before the 1917 Revolution, there were two Rabbis, one for the Chasidim and another for the non-Chasidim. When the non-Chasidic Rav of the city passed away, the entire Jewish community decided to accept R. Levi Yitzchok as their Rav.

He continued his activism in national Jewish affairs. As one "amazingly expert in the words of Kabbalah", as the previous Rebbe writes, he was entrusted by the Rebbe RaShaB in preparing for the defense of Mendel Beilis in the blood libel trial of 1911. The priest responsible for the accusation claimed to find support in Kabbalah for his libel, and the Rebbe RaShaB referred all queries to R. Levi Yitzchok.

He was active in organizing relief for the Jewish refugees from Poland and Lithuania who were blamed by the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, the Czar's uncle, Prince Nikolai Nikolevitch, for his defeat by the German army.

These innocent Jews were turned out of their homes near the fields of battle to evacuate into the Russian interior. Many came to the Ukraine where R. Levi Yitzchok made it his personal concern that they be adequately supplied with food and shelter. His own home was made available to the refugees.

The Bolshevik Revolution at the end of 1917 opened a new and bloody era for the Jews of Russia.

The 1917 Revolution brought chaos and civil war. As the situation began to stabilize during the 1920's, the new Soviet regime proceeded to implement its anti religious policies.

The Jewish masses, though loyal in the most part to Judaism, found it increasingly difficult to keep Mitzvos. Jobs where one could keep Shabbos and Yom Tov were almost impossible to find; religious articles and books were prohibited. Also banned was Jewish Education and few were courageous enough to risk sending their children to the underground cheder-schools established by the previous Rebbe and his Chasidim.

They tried to inculcate into their children the fundamental of Yiddishkeit, but it seemed infinitesimal in comparison with the systematic indoctrination they received at school and in their entire environment.

When Jews were weighed down with economic hardship, it fell to "Reb Levik" to raise their spirits and provide encouragement.

This was made difficult by the penalties the government imposed on Rabbis and the harassment of the Yevsektzia (Jewish section of the Communist Party). Seeing how little they could accomplish many rabbis simply resigned their positions. One of the few to remain till the end was Reb Leivik. He continued to fulfill in secret all his previous rabbinical functions.

Many, even party members, would still secretly approach the Rav to have their children circumcised or to perform marriages. Once, when a young couple came in the dead of night to request a Chupah, he insisted on finding ten Jews. After managing to scrape together nine, he finally requested the tenth, the government supervisor of his building, whose job it was to spy on his religious activities! The Jew agreed and thankfully no more was heard about it.

When the Bolshevik war on religion reached its peak and details began seeping through to the outside world, the Vatican called for a crusade against the Soviet Government. The regime didn't find it in their best interest to have world opinion so solidly against them, and sought means for weakening the damage.

One ruse was calling a meeting at Minsk of thirty two rabbis of White Russia, at which they were coerced into signing a paper declaring that there existed no religious persecution in Soviet Union.

Intoxicated with their success, the government called a similar meeting at Kharkov of all Ukrainian rabbis. They realized R. Levi Yitzchok would be the hardest nut to crack. The local NKVD chief called him to a personal interview to explain the significance of such a declaration and how it could contribute to the national cause. He offered R. Levi Yitzchok a first class train ticket— compliments of the NKVD.

R. Levi Yitzchok was not flattered. Thanking him for his kindness, he politely refused, coolly informing him that he could pay for his own trip. The NKVD chief had not expected such a slap in the face from a rabbi but he had no choice to accept it in silence.

In Kharkov, a stranger, a government agent, moved among the rabbis. They were afraid to utter a word. Not Reb Leivik. He expressed his firm opinion that it would be wrong to sign a false declaration.

The Ukrainian Minister of Education called in R. Levi Yitzchok to reprimand him. He warned him that these actions could be viewed as treasonous and counterrevolutionary. Reb Leivik refused to budge and convinced his colleagues to resist and pressure. The meeting ended in failure.

Meanwhile, Reb Leivik discovered a person about to leave the country. He sent a messenger imploring him to inform the world press of this coercion. The sensation was smeared all over the front pages to

the international press—with a caricature of a secret police agent pointing his pistol at a bearded Rabbi forcing him to sign the paper before him.

On a questionnaire for a government census, each person had to declare whether or not he believed in G-d. Many feared writing the truth. Reb Leivik stormed publicly that to do so was forbidden by the Torah. One man was so affected by Reb Leivik's words, that, on learning that his wife had filled out the form in his absence, answering for him that he was not a believer, he immediately went to the Census Office and demanded that they return the form, as it had been incorrectly filled out.

When Reb Leivik was later arrested, his public call not to sign for denial of G-d was included among the charges. He answered that he had simply called for Soviet citizens to answer questions honestly...

There was difficulty in obtaining Kosher Matzos. He inquired until he found highly-placed contacts through whom he succeeded in reaching the President of the USSR, himself. The government agreed to supply all Jews with Matzos according to R. Levi Yitzchok's requirements.

At 3:00 am on Nisan 9, of 1939, loud knocks were heard at Reb Leivik's door. NKVD agents searched the house, sifting through his valuable library and his own manuscripts, packing them all into cases. By 6:00 am they were through. "Rabbi, put on your coat and follow us". Realizing it was unlikely he would be home for Pesach, he requested and was granted permission to take with him two kilos of Matzah.

So began the ten long months, three hundred and three days, the sixty one year old Rav was imprisoned. After six and a half months he was informed that he had been sentenced to five years exile in chilli, a primitive Tartar village in remotest Kazakhstan, Central Asia, a few hundred miles from the Tibetan border.

So broken physically was Reb Leivik that when Reb-bitzen Chanah was finally able to see him briefly before his departure for Alma Ata, capital of Kazakhstan, she could barely recognize him. He hungered there for lack of kosher food and had gone without medical attention. His first wish was to tell him how many days Cheshvan had that year, so he would know when to light candles for Chanukah.

The journey to Alma Ata took a month. Reb Leivik was upset by the lack of water for Negel Vasser. For eleven days only limited quantities of water were given each prisoner. Reb Leivik used it for Negel Vasser, exchanging even the bulk of his rations for a little extra water.

What hurt Reb Leivik most was his lack of Torah books for study, and paper to record his stream of original Torah insights. Besides the rare scraps of paper that came his way he utilized the page edges of the Tanya and Zohar that the Rebbitzen had managed to bring him for writing commentaries. The impossibility of obtaining ink was remedied by Rebbitzen Chanah manufacturing her own from local herbs and crushed pencil leads.

Upon publication of the five volumes of “Likutei Levi Yitzchok” in 1971-3, the Torah world was amazed at the originality of Reb Leivik’s new approach to Torah explanation, based on the intimate relationship between every single detail of Torah phraseology, even the most seemingly irrelevant, with the underlying Kabbalistic significance.

They were further amazed at his unbelievable erudition that knew no bounds, quoting verbatim from every sidra of the Torah, every book of Tanach, every tractate of Gemara and numerous other Halachic and especially Kabbalistic works, all of which he is known definitely not to have had with him in his exile.

Sadly, most of his voluminous writings from before his imprisonment were apparently destroyed during the Nazi occupation of Yekaterinoslav, when his second son, Berel was also tragically murdered, HY”D.

As the five lonely years of exile drew to a close in 1944, he was shocked to learn that the government planned to extend all expired terms of imprisonment and exile for even longer. Before an official order would be received by the local NKVD office it was necessary to forestall it with a release document. But how?

Since the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941, thousands of Jews fled to inner Russia. Many found their way to Tashkent and Samarkand, others to Alma Ata, among them Lubavitcher Chasidim and friends of Reb Leivik. They gathered a large sum of money and endangered their own lives, bribing government officials to issue an order for his release. On Pesach of 1944 he was free to leave.

He arrived in Alma Ata totally broken in body from his harsh imprisonment and subsequent exile. He was dying of a critical sickness and barely four months left to his life. His devoted friends went out of their way to take care of all his needs, and to make the last months of his life comfortable.

Meanwhile, his spirits took an upward turn. Here were hundreds of refugees, Chabad Chasidim, Polish Chassidim, Misnagdim - he had Jews with whom to Farbreng.

His joy knew no bounds. The Jews of Alma Ata responded in kind. After experiencing hell on earth in

their flight, separated from families, friends, Torah mentors, they found here a Torah giant to whom they could look for direction, advice and comfort. But it was all too brief a period of time.

Despite his increasingly critical sickness and past suffering for his work for Yiddishkeit, Reb Leivik bravely resumed his exhortations in public, to strengthen observing Mitzvos despite all who seek to prevent it. His fiery words on Shavuos were heard in astonishment and fright by those in shul; they hadn’t heard such words in years, especially from one who held a prominent rabbinical position and suffered so terribly.

The NKVD spies were in shul. Reb Leivik’s home was visited frequently during the next weeks by NKVD agents, who found him confined to his sick bed. As the end approached, many Jews found excuses to absent themselves from work to spend time with the dying Rav.

They could not tear themselves away from his captivating personality, wisdom and counsel, his encouragement to remain strong to Yiddishkeit even in such times. And he, too, sensing how much they craved his words, fought with his last strength to fulfill their spiritual needs.

The final hours came. He barely spoke, his lips were murmuring continuously. The evening before his passing away, he suddenly opened his eyes and requested that his hands be washed. “It’s time to get over to the other side...” were his last spoken words.

The next morning, Menachem Av 20, his situation worsened considerably. His pains were unbearable and he indicated several times they should turn him over. His lips continued moving ceaselessly and Reb Hishel Rabinovitz, who put himself out for Reb Leivik more than anyone else, put his ear close to hear.

They were words from Tehillim 77: “Ve’ikvosecha Lo Nodau” (Your footsteps are not known) “Oy, Ikvos Meshicha...Ikvos Meshicha (The footsteps of Moshiach, the period of suffering, physical and spiritual, right before the coming of Moshiach).

So passed away the last Rav of Yekaterinoslav of that time period, the great leader of Russian Jewry, a man of invincible courage to rise above the storm and inspire all with his bravery and fortitude.

*May it be the will of Ha-
shem that these days
change to days of
happiness and joy.*

The Tzemach Tzedek, who used to refer to the Rebbe (R' Yisroel) of Ruzhin as "the holy Ruzhiner," once related:

The holy Ruzhiner would not brook any melancholy nor even bitterness - with the result that his Chassidim became playful. One Tisha B'Av they occupied themselves for a while tossing burs at each other. Then they decided to climb onto the roof of the Beis Midrash and to lower a noose over the entrance. Whoever walked in the door could then be lassoed and promptly hoisted onto the roof. The prank succeeded until, sure enough, who should walk in but their Rebbe, the Ruzhiner. From up there it was hard to tell one hat from another, and only when the tzaddik was halfway up did they identify him. When they had lowered him to the ground he exclaimed: "Master of the Universe! If your children do not observe your Yom Tov, then take it away from them!" (Sefer Haminhagim)

There will be a Siyum, IY"H every night after
Maariv from Rosh Chodesh Av, Thursday night,
July 12, thru Tu B'Av, July 26th.

Menachem Av 5778 Calendar

CALENDAR TIMES ARE FOR LOS ANGELES

Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av
Av 1/July 13/ Friday

Matos Masei
Shabbos Chazak
Av 2/ July 14

Light Candles Friday July 13: **7:47**
Shabbos Ends: **8:50**
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:25**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 2

Devarim
Shabbos Chazon
Av 9/July 21

Light Candles Friday July 20 **7:44**
Shabbos Mincha **6:00**
Stop eating by **8:02:**
Shabbos Ends **8:47**
Ma'ariv **9:10**
Last time to Read Shema **9:27**
Fast Deferred to Sunday

FAST of AV 9 (deferred)
Av 10/ July 22/ Sunday

Shacharis (First Minyan) **8:00**
Shacharis (Second Minyan) **9:00**
Shachris (Third Minyan) **10:00**
Chatzos **12:59**
Mincha with Talis/Tefillin-First minyan **1:35**
Mincha with Talis/Tefillin-second minyan **7:00**
Fast Ends: **8:37**

V'Eschanan
Shabbos Nachamu
Av 16/July 28

Light Candles Friday July 27: **7:39**
Shabbos Ends: **8:42**
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:30**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 3

Eikev
Shabbos Mevarchim Elul
Av 23/ August 4

Light Candles Friday August 3 **7:33**
Tehillim **8:15**
Shachris **10:00**
Shabbos Ends: **8:36**
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:32**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 4

Re'eh
Rosh Chodesh Elul Day One
Av 30/August 11
Light Candles Friday August 10: **7:27**
Shabbos Ends: **8:30**
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:34**
Pirkei Avos Chapter 5
Start saying L'Dovid Hashem Ori

Rosh Chodesh Day Two
Elul 1/August 12/Sunday
We start blowing shofar after Shacharis

Molad of Elul
Shabbos/Av 30/August 11
7:33 (9 *chalakim*) PM

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Directives of the Rebbe for Menachem Av - המעשה הוא העיקר

1. Learn the halachas pertaining to the Nine Days.
2. We should add in learning Torah and giving Tzedakah.
3. We should learn about the building of the Beis Hamikdash from Sefer Yechezkel (from Chapter 40 on), from the Mishnayos of Midos, and from Rambam - Laws of Beis Hamikdash, also how it's explained in Chassidus.
4. We should try to make a Siyum each of the Nine Days, as well as Tishah B'Av and up until Av 15.
5. We should make the Siyum as public as possible, even get small children involved.(I.e. Shuls, Camps etc..)
6. We should connect the Siyum with giving Tzedakah.
7. On the Fifth of Av, the Yartzeit of the Arizal, we should add in Torah and Tzedakah, utilizing the day properly.
8. Make a farbrengen on the Fifteenth of Av, and publicize what the Gemorah says that from the Fifteenth of Av the night becomes longer and we must add in our learning of Torah. (Since the nights were created for learning) The farbrengens should be made for men, for women, and for children.
9. We should add in our learning of Moshiach and Geulah, as they are in the Rambam laws of Melachim and in the Gemorah in Sanhedrin, and as explained in Chassidus. We should make this learning as public as possible.
10. We must add in Ahavas Yisroel - Ahavas Chinom.

***May it be the will of Hashem that these days change
to days of happiness and joy.***