

Tzom Shiv'a Asar BeTamuz (Fast of 17th of the month of Tamuz) - is one of the six days of fasting in the Jewish calendar year. The most important one is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). The seventeenth of Tamuz is not a fasting of day and night, but only a day of fast, called in Hebrew "Ta'anit". The seventeenth of Tamuz commemorates the fall of the wall of Jerusalem three weeks before the destruction of the First and Second Temples (even though historically there was a difference of a few days).



*Moses with the 2 Tablets,
Or Torah Synagogue, Acre*



*Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)
The Golden Calf*

The fasting day of the seventeenth of Tamuz refers to five events of mourning according to the sages of the Mishna (Tractate Ta'anit chapter 4, lesson six): Moses breaking the first two tablets of the Ten Commandments because of the sin of the Golden Calf, the cancellation of the permanent offering in the Temple in Jerusalem due to the Babylonian siege (preventing the collection of sheep and cattle for the offerings), the breaking of the walls of Jerusalem during the destruction of the First and Second Temples, and the burning of the Torah scrolls by Apostomus (a Roman soldier during the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans), and the desecration of the Second Temple by placing of idolatry in the Temple. (One version in the book of Chashmonaim I, chapter 1, verse 56, attributes the name Apostomus to King Antiochus I from the time of the Maccabean Revolt. Another version is based on the book The Jewish Revolt by Josephus Flavius/Joseph Ben Matityahu in chapter 12 paragraph b.)

Tzom Tish'a Be'Av (Fast of the 9th of the month of Av) - on the 9th of the month of Av, which is the 11th month in the Jewish calendar concludes a period of mourning. It is a day of mourning and a full day and night of fasting. The 9th of Av fast commemorates not only the destruction of the First and

Second Temples, but is also the date of a number of other major tragic events in Jewish history. The first tragic event, which occurred on the 9th of the month of Av is the "Sin of the Spies", about which we read in the Book of Numbers (Hebrew: "Bamidbar") in chapters 13-15. It is again told by Moses in the first portion of the fifth book of the Torah, the Book of Deuteronomy ("Devarim"). In the second year after the Exodus from Egypt, Moses sent 12 leaders of the tribes of Israel to tour the Land of Israel. After 40 days they returned, but ten of them, except for Joshua Bin Nun and Caleb Ben Jephune, expressed doubts that the people of Israel would be able to conquer it even though they admitted that it was a good land. Due to their lack of faith in God, the whole nation was punished and had to spend 40 years in the Sinai desert until the doubting and faithless generation died out. Only then did Joshua lead the people of Israel to conquer the Promised Land of Israel (Canaan). The second tragic event was the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians, which led to the Babylonian Exile in 580 BC. The third event was the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 ACE. It was followed by the expulsion of the Jewish people across the Roman Empire, and the building of a Roman city Aelia Capitolina as a replacement of Jerusalem in the year 130 ACE by Caesar Adrianus. The fourth event was the fall of the last Jewish fortress in the Land of Israel ending the Jewish Revolt against the Romans in the year 136 ACE. The fifth event was the expulsion of the Jews from England by

King Edward I in 1290. The sixth event is the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 by Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II of Aragon. The most famous person who fled Spain due to this expulsion was Rabbi Don Isaac Abarbanel in spite of the fact that he was the king's finance minister. This was after he had also fled from Portugal to Spain due to persecution. He then fled to Naples, in Italy, from which he then had to flee again to Padua, near Venice. His bible commentary is considered to be among the most comprehensive and authoritative since Rashi and Maimonides. The seventh event was the beginning of the German Nazi Final Solution during the Second World War when six million Jews were exterminated.

Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, Photo by Prof. Friedrich Wolf from Germany during a helicopter flight with Ari Lipinski



Color

Jewish and Israeli Holidays

By Ari Lipinski

A Journey through 3800 Years of Jewish Tradition
in the Biblical Land of Milk and Honey



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