

The Three Weeks: What, How, and Why – Answers to Comprehension Questions

Source 1: Mishnah *Ta'anit*

1. 5 each
2. Both

NOTE: Depending on the setting, you may want to (a) go over what the 5 events of each day were, (b) add in the more “contemporary” events that occurred on Tisha B’Av – the Expulsion from Spain and the start of World War I. You may also want to talk about a “designated day” or “season” for tragedies (and for joy) in Judaism.

Source 2: Talmud *Ta'anit*

a. *Ta'anit* 26b

1. Cut your hair and wash your clothes.
2. If Tisha B’Av falls on a Friday

NOTE: Tisha B’Av can NO LONGER fall on Friday because the calendar is fixed. The day of the week of Tisha B’Av is the same as the first day of Pesach. The first day of Pesach cannot be on a Friday because then Rosh HaShanah will be on Sunday, which also cannot occur.

3. Eat meat and drink wine

b. *Ta'anit* 29b

4. Cutting hair and washing clothes
5. Rabbi Meir – From *Rosh Chodesh Av* until after the fast of Tisha B’Av
Rabbi Yehudah – Throughout the whole month of Av
Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel – only during the week of Tisha B’Av

c. *Ta'anit* 29b, cont.

6. Meat, wine, and more than 2 cooked dishes
7. More lenient

Source 3: *Peninei Halacha*

a. Chapter 8: The Customs of the Three Weeks – Part 1

1. They came later, after the Sages, during the time of the *Rishonim*
2. Music, dancing, and saying *Shechechiyanu*

NOTE: This is where the issue of weddings and buying new clothes arises. As this is NOT a “halacha” lesson, it isn’t focused on. The educator can expand if desired and/or appropriate.

3. Ashkenazim

b. Chapter 8: The Customs of the Three Weeks – Part 10: Haircut

4. It’s already mentioned in the Gemara
5. They are associated with “joy”; not cutting one’s hair is a sign of mourning

c. Chapter 8: The Customs of the Three Weeks – Part 13: Meat and Wine

6. Ashkenazim (and some Sephardim)
7. *Erev* Tisha B'Av
8. The Nine Days beginning with *Rosh Chodesh Av* (until the middle of the 10th)
9. The week in which Tisha B'Av falls