



The Three Negative Weeks

The days between the 17th day of *Tammuz* (Cancer) and 9th day of *Av* (Leo) are called days of "Bein HaMetzarim" or as they are known in English, the "Three Negative Weeks." They are slightly harder than the Counting of the *Omer* (the 49 Days between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*).

During these weeks, we don't meditate on the Tetragramaton, the *Yud, Hei, Vav, Hei* in the *Amida* prayer or during other meditations as we do throughout the rest of the year, but only on a concealed way as follows (for a deeper understanding, ask the teachers at the Kabbalah Centre):

The first Y.H.V.H. we shift one Hebrew letter before so we meditate on **ט.ד.ה.ר.**

The second Y.H.V.H. we shift one Hebrew letter after, so we meditate on **כ.ו.ג.א.**

The third Y.H.V.H. we use the *Atbash* code, so we meditate on **ב.ז.צ.פ.**

(See the attached meditation chart for these meditations simplified)

During the Three Weeks, we have all the same restrictions as during the Counting of the *Omer* which help us channel the energy during this time appropriately:

- no hair cut/shaving
- don't buy new things (not a problem to buy shoes)
- don't get married
- no new jobs, signing contracts, buying property/house etc.

In addition, there are more restrictions **starting from Rosh Chodesh Av (the New Moon of Leo)**. The kabbalists recommend restricting from eating meat or drinking wine for the last Nine Days. This is so that we do not connect to the energy of Judgment that is inherent in wine and meat. On Shabbat, we can eat meat and drink wine without this concern because of the natural energy of Mercy that is present during Shabbat.

IT IS ADVISED NOT TO SWIM IN THE SEA DURING THOSE WEEKS, AND TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL STARTING FROM AV (NO SEA OR SWIMMING POOL)

The **5th day of Av** (*Hei b'Av*) is the death anniversary of the Ari, Rabbi Isaac Luria. We can connect to his energy by studying from his works past Kabbalistic Midnight.



9th Day of Av

The 9th day of Av is the last day of the 3 negative weeks. Even though it's the last day, we still don't eat meat on the 10th day of Av, as the Temple was still burning on that day.

We read the *Megilat Eicha* (Scroll of Lamentation) on the night of the 9th of Av, and there is no second reading during the day as in some other holiday connections.

The 9th of Av is a full fast day meaning we should restrict from food and water from sunset to nightfall (approximately 25 hours). Before the fast starts, we should have a light final meal, and once we finish that meal, we should wash hands again, make *HaMotzi* on bread, salt, and ashes, and eat a hard boiled egg dipped in a bit of ashes (just burn a piece of paper in order to get the ashes). This meal is done on the floor, and each one does the blessing of *birkat haMazon* separately.

The Ari gave us a trick how to have a good fast: drink a glass of water, just before the fast starts, take nine sips, turning the cup counter clockwise between each sip (concentrate on Right, Left, and Central Columns three times).

There are five restrictions on the 9th of Av:

- no food
- no leather shoes
- no washing
- no marital relations/intercourse
- no drinking

Pay attention in the *Siddur*, and you will notice that the *Amida* prayer has a special meditation for 9th of Av.

We sit on the floor from the beginning of the holiday till around 1 pm (Kabbalistic Noon), we pray the morning prayer with *Tefilin*. Make sure you put on *Tefilin* while you are sitting on the floor in order to ground the ego. There is a short Torah Reading for 9th of Av that can be found in the *Siddur*.

After *Shacharit* it is okay to pray *Mincha*.

At the end of 9th of Av there is the blessing of the new moon.



Meditation for Yemei Bin HaMetzarim (The Three Negative Weeks)

טְדֵהָד

Right

מִיָּזָן אֲבָרָהֶם:

כוּוֹן

Left

בְּמוֹצֵי הַיָּמִיתִים:

מִצְפָּצ

Central

הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ:

רִצָּה

To transform chaos to order meditate on these names

טְדֵהָד כוּוֹן מִצְפָּצ

שְׁלֹמֶה

Use these names to create peace

טְדֵהָד כוּוֹן מִצְפָּצ

שְׂמֹמֶתֶת אֶת הַשֵּׁיף הַרְאֵשׁוֹנָה בְּגִבּוֹ אֶלֶף לְבוֹד הַה יוֹד בּוֹם + אֲדָנִי.
שְׁלֹמֶה עַ"ה גִּיבּוֹ אֶלֶף לְבוֹד הַה יוֹד בּוֹם + אֲדָנִי + טְדֵהָד כוּוֹן מִצְפָּצ + ו' שְׂמֹמֶת
(טְדֵהָד כוּוֹן מִצְפָּצ אֱלֹהִים אֲדָנִי יְהוָה)