

Laws of Fasts, Chapter 5 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Shiur — Laws of Fasts, Chapter 5

Introduction to the Chapter — The Foundation of Fixed Fasts

The Rambam begins Chapter 5 which deals with fasts that are fixed for all generations — different from the previous chapters which discussed fasts for troubles (fast for rain, etc.).

The chapter includes three main topics: (1) Laws of the four/five fixed fasts; (2) Laws of mourning of the three weeks and nine days — mourning for the Destruction; (3) Additional enactments of the Sages as remembrance of the Destruction.

Novel Points:

- **Why not fast continuously?** We live in a time of the Destruction of the Temple — a permanent trouble. According to the logic of fasting (from the ways of repentance — to awaken to troubles), one should fast continuously until Mashiach comes, just as with a fast for rain where one fasts until rain comes. And indeed, as the Gemara brings, there were people who did so.

- **Two reasons why one cannot:** (a) Practical — one cannot fast an entire year; (b) Deeper — the Gemara calls it **aveilus yeshana** (old mourning) — it is a trouble that is diffuse, not acute. One can survive without a Temple, it is not like an urgent trouble where one must react now.

- **The model of Monday and Thursday:** Just as the Rambam says that when one cannot fast every day, one fasts Monday and Thursday — so too, when one cannot fast an entire year, one fasts four-five times a year. And part of the year (three weeks, nine days) one conducts oneself with customs of mourning — the same customs that were already seen by the fast for rain (rebuke to God, not giving greetings of peace, etc.). Additionally one makes remembrances of the Destruction. **Everything is one system** — to remember that there is a trouble and one must do repentance.

Law 1 — The Foundation of the Fixed Fasts

"There are days when all Israel fasts on them because of the troubles that occurred on them, in order to awaken the hearts and open the ways of repentance, and this will be a remembrance of our evil deeds and the deeds of our fathers which were like our deeds now, until it caused them and us those troubles. For in remembering these things we will return to do good, as it says 'and they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers...'"

Simple meaning: All Jews fast on certain days because troubles occurred on those days. The purpose is to awaken the hearts and open ways of repentance. This reminds us that our evil deeds are similar to the deeds of our fathers which caused

those troubles — and through this remembrance one should do repentance.

Novel Points:

1. **Fasting is not repentance itself — but a preparation:** The Rambam's language "to awaken the hearts **and to open** the ways of repentance" shows that fasting itself is not the repentance. Fasting breaks the heart, and this opens the way to repentance. Repentance itself is fixing one's deeds — as the Rambam already taught earlier.

2. **Answer to the question "my grandfathers sinned, not me":** The Rambam answers with "the deeds of our fathers which were **like our deeds now**" — our fathers' sins are similar to our sins. "But we and our fathers have sinned." The verse "and they shall confess their iniquity **and the iniquity of their fathers**" shows that one confesses on both — because both are connected.

3. **Deeper explanation in "the iniquity of their fathers":** Mentioning the sins of the grandfathers is not just a historical remembrance. It reminds that **without awakening, sins are the default**. Man's nature is that without self-accounting he automatically falls to sins — just as it was with our grandfathers. Remembering their sins is remembering that without repentance, sins happen automatically.

4. **The Rambam's own interpretation:** It wasn't once a Destruction — rather when there were sins, a piece of destruction happened. He lists five things that occurred. Also in our time — we still don't have a Temple, there are troubles from time to time, all because of sins.

Law 1 (Continued) — Fast of Gedaliah, 3rd of Tishrei

"The third of Tishrei, when Gedaliah ben Achikam was killed, and the coal of Israel that remained was extinguished, and caused the completion of their exile."

Simple meaning: The third of Tishrei is a fast because Gedaliah ben Achikam was killed. He was the last leader of the Jews who still remained in the Land of Israel after the First Destruction. His death extinguished the last spark of Jewish leadership, and caused the exile to be completed.

Novel Points:

1. **The Rambam's own interpretation — different from the Gemara:** The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 18b) says: **"to teach you that the death of the righteous is equivalent to the burning of the House of our God"** — the death of the righteous is as severe as the Destruction of the Temple. The simple meaning of the Gemara is a general principle — every righteous person's death is as severe as the Destruction. **But the Rambam learns differently:** He doesn't say that every righteous person's death is like the Destruction. He learns that **specifically Gedaliah** — because he was the leader of the last Jews in the Land of Israel — his death was

literally a continuation of the Destruction. "The **coal** of Israel that remained was extinguished" — the fire is already not burning (Destruction of the Temple), but there was still a glowing coal. When Gedaliah was killed, even the coal went out. **This was the final blow of the First Destruction.**

2. "And caused the completion of their exile": "Lehasem" means to complete — this was the final seal of the First Exile. As long as Gedaliah still lived, one could still have turned back. After his death it was sealed.

Law 1 (Continued) — Tenth of Teves

"The tenth of Teves, when the wicked king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem and brought it into siege and distress."

Simple meaning: On the tenth of Teves, Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem with a siege. "Samach" means he encircled Jerusalem. "In siege and distress" is language from the rebuke.

Laws 1-2 (Continued) — Seventeenth of Tammuz: Five Things

The Rambam lists five things that happened on the seventeenth of Tammuz:

1. The Tablets Were Broken

Simple meaning: When Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Mount Sinai.

Novel Points: The breaking of the Tablets is not itself the tragedy — the tragedy is the Golden Calf, and the breaking of the Tablets was a result/punishment from it. One can ask the same question about the Destruction of the Temple — isn't the tragedy the sins, not the Destruction itself? The answer: By the Tablets it's different, because the breaking of the Tablets was something that Moshe Rabbeinu **chose** to do as a punishment, and God **chose** to destroy the Temple as a punishment. The punishment itself is also a trouble.

2. The Daily Offering Was Nullified in the First Temple

Simple meaning: Shortly before the Destruction, on the seventeenth of Tammuz, the animals for offerings ran out, and the daily offering stopped. This was a great trouble — the service of the Temple ceased.

3. Jerusalem Was Breached in the Second Destruction

Simple meaning: In the Second Destruction, the Romans with battering rams broke through the walls of Jerusalem on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

Novel Points: In both Destructions, the seventeenth of Tammuz was the **beginning** of the Destruction (nullification of the daily offering / breaching of the wall), and Tisha B'Av was in both the **end** of the trouble.

4. Apostomus the Wicked Burned a Torah Scroll

Simple meaning: A Roman general burned a Torah scroll. No one knows exactly who he was.

5. He Erected an Idol in the Sanctuary

Simple meaning: The Rambam learns that the **same Apostomus** placed an idol in the Sanctuary (not Menashe). The Rambam had this version in the Mishnah.

Law 2 (Continued) — Tisha B'Av: Five Things

1. It Was Decreed Upon Israel in the Desert That They Would Not Enter the Land of Israel

Simple meaning: After the spies returned, "and the people wept that night," it was decreed that the generation of the desert would die out in the desert.

2. The Temple Was Destroyed the First and Second Time

Simple meaning: The Temple was destroyed both times on Tisha B'Av.

3. Beitar Was Captured

Simple meaning: Beitar fell.

Novel Points:

- **The Rambam's way in his Commentary on the Mishnah:** As is his way, the Rambam gives the background needed to understand the topic. He explains that Beitar is not just a city — it was a great Jewish city with "thousands and myriads of Israel," and they had a "great king" — this is Bar Kochba (Ben Koziba). "And all Israel and the great Sages thought" (alluding to Rabbi Akiva) "that he was the Messianic king" — but he was not Mashiach, "and he fell into the hands of the nations and they were all killed."

- **"And it was a great trouble like the Destruction of the Temple":** The Rambam describes Beitar as a great trouble **like the Destruction of the Temple**. Why compare it to the Destruction of the Temple? At Beitar thousands and myriads of people were killed, and at the Temple it says it was wood and stones (a building). The Rambam wants to describe the magnitude of the trouble — it's not just a city that was lost, but the end of the hope for Mashiach.

4. Turnus Rufus the Wicked Plowed the Temple and Its Surroundings

Simple meaning: Turnus Rufus (a Roman governor, presumably a general named Rufus) plowed what remained of the Temple, "to fulfill 'Zion shall be plowed as a field.'"

Novel Points:

- **"To fulfill" doesn't mean he wanted to fulfill:** Turnus Rufus didn't say "for the sake of fulfilling 'Zion shall be plowed as a field'" — rather God allowed him to do this in order to fulfill the verse.

- **The historical explanation of the plowing:** In Roman custom, when founding a new city, the governor would take a plow and make the first plowing — this was the ceremony of laying the "cornerstone." After the destruction of Beitar, Hadrian decided to make Jerusalem into a pagan city — Aelia Capitolina — with a temple for Jupiter on the site of the Temple. The plowing was the symbolic act of founding the new Roman city, and he did this on Tisha B'Av.

- **"And on that day prepared for calamity":** Perhaps the Rambam means that the wicked one **specifically** chose this day — he **knew** it was a bad day for Jews, just as Hamas attacked on Simchas Torah, and just as Haman calculated his day. This is a "perverse sort of thing" — to humiliate Jews on their own bad day.

- **It was a new humiliation:** The plowing is not just a random act — it was a new humiliation for Jews, that a pagan city was made on the site of the Temple.

- **Discussion about dating of events:** Many of the events lasted more than one day (for example, the killings in Beitar). Since Tisha B'Av is a symbolic day — a "day designated for calamity" — it is attributed to that day. But with the plowing,

which is a symbolic act, the beginning was specifically Tisha B'Av literally.

Law 3 — The Four Fasts Explicit in Tradition

"These four fast days are explicitly stated in tradition — the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth."

Simple meaning: The source is the verse in Zechariah which lists four fasts. "The fourth" means the **month**, not the day:

- **Fast of the fourth** = Seventeenth of Tammuz (fourth month)
- **Fast of the fifth** = Tisha B'Av (month of Av, fifth month)
- **Fast of the seventh** = Third of Tishrei / Fast of Gedaliah (seventh month)
- **Fast of the tenth** = Tenth of Teves (tenth month)

Novel Points — Dispute between Rambam and Ramban: Obligation of the Four Fasts in Our Time:

- **The Rambam writes that the fasts are "explicit in tradition"** — this means it is an obligation.
- **The Ramban's position:** The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah brings a contradiction in the prophet — once it says not to fast, and once it is a fast. The Gemara's conclusion: **In time of peace — not to fast (if one doesn't want to); in time of persecution — yes to fast. Tisha B'Av is an exception because "troubles were multiplied on it."** The Ramban learns simply: In our time, when there is no persecution, there is no obligation to fast (except Tisha B'Av). Why do Jews still fast? Because **"they wanted"** — the people accepted it as a custom. It is an acceptance in the form of a custom, not a rabbinic obligation.
- **The Rambam's position (Commentary on the Mishnah): "Peace" doesn't mean just peace between Jews and gentiles — "peace" means when there is a Temple; "no peace" means when there is no Temple.** The Rambam has a high definition of "peace" — not just that the gentile lets Jews live in a ghetto, but peace means when Jews are a nation with a Temple. **Therefore**, according to the Rambam, the fasting of the four fasts in our time is a **complete rabbinic obligation** (not just a custom), because as long as there is no Temple it is "no peace."

- **Practical difference: In the Second Temple period one fasted Tisha B'Av:** According to the Rambam, "in time of peace" one still fasts Tisha B'Av (troubles were multiplied on it). What did one fast for? For the fact that there was no complete repair — there was no Divine Presence, etc.

- **The Maggid Mishneh's version:** The Maggid Mishneh had a version "and all Israel practiced in these times" — that all fasts are only a custom (like the Ramban). But this is an **error in the text**. The Rambam's true language "explicit in tradition" means it is a commandment/obligation, not just a custom. In the Commentary on the Mishnah it is clear that the Rambam holds differently from the Ramban.

Law 3 (Continued) — Fast of Esther / Fast of Haman

"The custom of all Israel in these times is to fast on the thirteenth of Adar."

Simple meaning: Besides the four fasts that are explicit in the words of tradition, there is another fast which is a **custom**

— the thirteenth of Adar. The source is "the matters of the fasts and their cry" — Esther wrote it down for Jews to repeat it.

Novel Points:

- **The Rambam calls it "Fast of Haman" (not "Fast of Esther"):** The Rambam looks at this fast from the side of the trouble (Haman), not from the salvation (Esther). This fits with the Rambam's general approach that the fasts are about troubles that can repeat — "such Hamans can also happen today."

- **Fast of Esther — all agree it is only a custom:** Even the Rambam who holds that the four fasts are a rabbinic obligation, agrees that the Fast of Esther is only a custom — "a remembrance of the fast they fasted in the days of Haman."

Law 4 — Fast of Esther That Falls on Shabbos

"The thirteenth of Adar that falls on Shabbos — we advance it and fast on Thursday which is the eleventh. But one of the four fast days that fall on Shabbos — we postpone it to after Shabbos. If they fall on Friday — we fast on Friday."

Simple meaning: The Fast of Esther is pushed earlier (Thursday), but the four fasts are pushed off to after Shabbos.

Novel Points: The difference is because the Fast of Esther is not a "calamity" — it is only a remembrance of a fast, therefore one can advance it. Also, with Purim we see that we advance (the Megillah), so advancement is a Purim matter. But with the four fasts — "we do not advance calamities."

Law 5 — Laws of All Fasts

"On all these fasts — we do not blow the shofar, there is no Ne'ilah prayer. But there is Torah reading morning and afternoon — Vayechal Moshe — even if it's not Monday/Thursday."

Simple meaning: On all fasts we read Vayechal Moshe morning and afternoon, even if it's not Monday and Thursday. No shofar and no Ne'ilah.

Novel Points: At a normal fast we read the rebuke, but at these fasts we only read Vayechal Moshe. Tisha B'Av is also different — in the morning we read Ki Solid Banim (in the regular order).

[Side note:] The thirteen attributes of mercy correspond to the thirteen fasts mentioned earlier — but it is noted that "it has no connection."

Law 5 (Continued) — Night of Tisha B'Av

"And on all of them one may eat and drink at night except Tisha B'Av. Tisha B'Av its night is like its day for everything, and one may only eat while it is still day, and its twilight period is forbidden like Yom Kippur."

Simple meaning: All other fasts one may eat at night. Tisha B'Av begins at night, and twilight is already forbidden — like the addition to Yom Kippur.

Law 6 — The Final Meal

"And one should not eat meat nor drink wine in the final meal."

Simple meaning: In the final meal one doesn't eat meat and doesn't drink wine.

Novel Points:

1. **Distinction between custom and law:** Earlier the Rambam mentioned the **custom** not to eat meat in the week of Tisha B'Av. Now he says the **law**: even one who is lenient to eat meat during the week, from the final meal onward one doesn't eat meat — this is from the essential law.

2. **Wine from its vat and salted meat:** Wine that is not older than three days (must) may be drunk, because it hasn't yet become wine. Salted meat that has been salted for three days no longer has the "excitement" of meat — may also be eaten. **This is from the essential law, not just according to the custom** — because salted meat is not "meat" for this matter.

Law 6 (Continued) — Two Dishes, Before/After Midday

"If one ate on the eve of Tisha B'Av after midday — one eats only one dish, not two dishes. But if one ate before midday — one may eat whatever one wants, even though one doesn't eat afterwards."

Simple meaning: The restrictions of the final meal (not eating meat, not two dishes) only apply if one eats after midday on the eve of Tisha B'Av. Before midday there is no restriction.

Eve of Tisha B'Av That Falls on Shabbos / Tisha B'Av That Falls on Shabbos

"The eve of Tisha B'Av that falls on Shabbos — one eats and drinks all one's needs, and brings to one's table even like the feast of Solomon. And similarly Tisha B'Av itself that falls on Shabbos — one lacks nothing."

Simple meaning: On Shabbos there is no mourning — one makes a regular Shabbos without any lack, even great meat and fish and all delicacies. When Tisha B'Av itself falls on Shabbos (and we postpone it to Sunday), the Shabbos is completely normal.

Novel Points: It is mentioned that the Hagahos Maimoniyos brings that in Ashkenaz people conducted themselves with stringencies (refraining from marital relations and the like), but the shiur doesn't go into the details of the customs.

The Measure of All the People vs. The Early Pious Ones

"And the measure of all the people who cannot be in suffering — [enough with the stringencies he listed]. But the early pious ones — this is what they would do: On the eve of Tisha B'Av they would bring to a person alone dry bread with salt, and soak it in water, and sit between the oven and the stove and eat it, and drink upon it a jug of water, in worry, in desolation and in weeping, like one whose dead lies before him."

Simple meaning: Two levels: (1) For the general public — the restrictions he listed are enough, because people cannot endure more suffering; (2) The early pious ones — would eat alone (no zimmun), only dry bread with salt dipped in water,

sitting between the oven and stove (a disgusting / lowly place), drinking only water, all with worry, desolation, and weeping — like one whose dead lies before him.

Novel Points:

1. **The early pious ones = Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai:** The Rambam never calls him by name, but "the early pious ones." In the Gemara it already says that the early pious ones is Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai. This is (according to the shiur) the third time the Rambam brings a story of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai.

2. **Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai's level:** He always expressed with his "body language" feelings — "it appeared upon him like one whose dead lies before him." This was his level — one could see it on his face.

3. **"Like one whose dead lies before him":** It's not someone else's dead, not a trouble that happened once — it's **his** dead, his system. A personal mourning.

4. **"Between the oven and the stove":** This is connected to the matter of ashes from a burnt offering — a lowly, disgusting place, a temporary manner.

5. **"Such is fitting for sages to do, or close to this":** The Rambam says that not everyone is at this level, but at least something — one should see that it's a sad thing.

6. **The Ramban's testimony:** The Ramban (quoted by the Maggid Mishneh) tells a story about himself: "And I exerted myself and I am from the early pious ones, and in my days I never ate on the eve of Tisha B'Av a cooked dish, even of lentils." He never ate any cooked dish on the eve of Tisha B'Av, not even lentils. "In my days" simply means that also by his father it was so — from childhood on.

Pregnant and Nursing Women on Tisha B'Av

"Pregnant and nursing women fast and complete on Tisha B'Av."

Simple meaning: Even pregnant and nursing women fast a full day on Tisha B'Av, not like other fasts where they are exempt.

Novel Points:

1. **Distinction between Tisha B'Av and other fasts:** By the previous fasts (fast for rain) we learned that pregnant and nursing women are not obligated. But Tisha B'Av is different — they complete.

2. **The Ramban's position regarding the sick:** The Maggid Mishneh brings the Ramban that "pregnant and nursing women" must mean when they are not sick. A regular pregnant/nursing woman fasts, but a sick person — even if there's no danger — the Sages did not decree, even on Tisha B'Av.

3. **Connection to the Ramban's other dispute:** Because the Ramban holds that [certain fasts are] only a custom, he is presumably lenient for a sick person. The Rambam doesn't need a sick person [to be lenient], because for a sick person one is lenient even with Torah laws like Sukkah.

Prohibitions of Tisha B'Av: Washing, Anointing, Wearing Shoes, Marital Relations

"It is forbidden in washing whether in hot or cold water, even to put one's finger in water. And it is

forbidden in anointing for pleasure. And in wearing shoes and in marital relations — like Yom Kippur."

Simple meaning: Tisha B'Av has all five afflictions like Yom Kippur — washing (even putting a finger in water), anointing for pleasure, wearing shoes, marital relations.

Novel Points: Anointing not for pleasure (like when one is dirty) is permitted, as we learned earlier by other fasts.

Work on Tisha B'Av

"A place where they are accustomed to do work they do, a place where they are accustomed not to do they don't do. And in every place Torah scholars are idle on it. And the Sages said that anyone who does work on it will never see a sign of blessing."

Simple meaning: Work on Tisha B'Av depends on the local custom. But Torah scholars are always idle from work. And whoever does work will not see a sign of blessing.

Novel Points: The Rambam says that for Torah scholars it's not just a custom but "it is fitting for them" — it suits them.

Giving Greetings on Tisha B'Av

"We do not give greetings to one another on Tisha B'Av, rather we sit dejected and groaning like mourners."

Simple meaning: We don't greet anyone, we sit with mourning and groaning like mourners.

Novel Points:

1. **Textual discussion: "like mourners for a mother" vs. "like mourners":** There was a discussion whether it says "like mourners for a mother" (like mourners for a mother) or "like mourners." The conclusion is that "like mourners for a mother" is the correct version — it's language from a verse, a metaphor.

2. **How to treat an ignoramus who says greetings:** Torah scholars understand that we don't greet because it's Tisha B'Av, not because we're angry. But an ignoramus doesn't understand this. If an ignoramus says greetings — we respond to him with a soft voice and with a heavy head, we answer weakly so he should catch that something is different. Through this he will ask why, and learn one law — "punctually he will become a drop less of an ignoramus."

Torah Study on Tisha B'Av

"It is forbidden to read in the Torah, Prophets and Writings, and to study Mishnah, laws, Talmud and Aggadah. And one only reads in Job and in Lamentations and in the bad things in Jeremiah."

Simple meaning: We don't learn any Tanach, no Mishnayos, no Rambam, no Gemara, no Aggadah. Only Job, Lamentations (= the Book of Eichah, which the Sages call "the Book of Lamentations"), and the bad things in Jeremiah.

Novel Points: "Lamentations" means the Book of Eichah — the Sages used to call it the Book of Lamentations.

Children of the Study House

"Children of the study house are idle on it."

Simple meaning: Children in cheder don't learn on Tisha B'Av.

Novel Points: We don't make a cheder to learn Job — we don't make any cheder at all.

Tefillin on Tisha B'Av

"Some of the Sages were accustomed not to put on tefillin on it."

Simple meaning: There is a custom not to put on tefillin on Tisha B'Av.

Novel Points:

1. **The Rambam's position:** The Rambam appears to hold that one may put on tefillin — he only says that "some of the Sages were accustomed" not to put them on, which means one may if one wants, but there is such a custom.

2. **Distinction between a mourner and Tisha B'Av:** The Rambam holds that a mourner may not put on tefillin, but Tisha B'Av is only a custom of some Sages.

3. **Our custom:** We make a compromise — we put on tefillin at Minchah (after midday), which is a different custom from both positions.

The Week in Which Tisha B'Av Falls — Laws

"The week in which Tisha B'Av falls — it is forbidden to cut hair and to launder and it is forbidden to wear pressed clothing even linen clothing, until the fast passes."

Simple meaning: "Week" here means **the week** (not Shabbos day). In the week of Tisha B'Av: no haircuts, no laundering, no wearing pressed/freshened clothes — even linen, which normally requires ironing, because with linen ironing is not a luxury but a necessity — even that is forbidden.

Novel Points:

- The prohibition of laundering goes further than just "not wearing fresh laundry" — **even to launder and put aside for after the fast** (laundering in order to wear after Tisha B'Av) is forbidden. The reason: so one should not be distracted from the mourning.

- Customs:

- **Israel has already practiced** not to eat meat in the week of Tisha B'Av — this is a **custom**, not a law.

- **And not to enter the bathhouse** until the fast passes — also a **custom**, not an obligation.

- **There are places** that have an even greater custom: **to nullify slaughter from Rosh Chodesh until the fast** — not only that we don't eat meat, but we don't slaughter at all. And not just from the week of Tisha B'Av, but already from Rosh Chodesh Av.

- **"To nullify slaughter"** is not the same as not eating meat — because one can have smoked meat, jerky, or other things that can be kept without slaughter. The custom of nullifying slaughter is a stringency on this.

When Av Enters We Diminish in Joy

"When Av enters we diminish in joy."

Simple meaning: From the beginning of the month of Av we begin to diminish in joy.

Remembrance of the Destruction — Building

"Since the Temple was destroyed, the Sages of that generation enacted that one should never build a plastered and decorated building like the buildings of kings."

Simple meaning: Since the Destruction, the Sages enacted that one doesn't build a house with plaster (fine paint) and decorated (engraved walls) like kings build.

Novel Points:

1. **What does "plastered and decorated" mean:** Plaster is a covering for walls (a fine paint/covering), decorated is engraved/decorative walls. This is only a royal manner — a normal person didn't have this.

2. **"Like the buildings of kings":** The prohibition is only on a royal house, not on a normal house. There was a discussion whether today's buildings are "royal buildings," and the conclusion is that there is a distinction between a normal way to build and a royal way.

A Cubit by a Cubit — Remembrance of the Destruction in Building

"One who plasters his house with plaster... leaves a place of a cubit by a cubit opposite the entrance without plaster."

Simple meaning: Whoever plasters his house with plaster, should leave a piece of wall (a cubit by a cubit) without plaster, opposite the entrance, as a remembrance of the Destruction.

Novel Points:

- "Plastered" and "decorated" is not like today's paint that everyone has — it's a special fancy covering that only kings had. The principle is that one may not build a royal house without a remembrance of the Destruction.

- **The Ramban** is brought: We don't mean that someone who buys a finished plastered house from a gentile must break it. ****One who acquired a plastered and decorated courtyard, it remains in its state and we do not obligate**

One who acquired a plastered and decorated courtyard, it remains in its state and we do not obligate him to scrape the walls. The matter is only that one should not invest so much — one should remember the pain. The proof is from Megillas Esther — Haman's house Mordechai received, and one didn't have to destroy the house.

- **Practically:** The custom is that no one conducts themselves with this. It is told that **Rav Ahrale Kolomeyer** told mussar to the **Divrei Chaim (Sanzer Rebbe)** that he forgot the cubit by a cubit. The Sanzer Rebbe answered that in his heart he always remembers — but afterwards he began to be careful about it. This shows that even the holy Sanzer Rebbe knew that the custom is not widespread.

Table, Jewelry, and Groom — Remembrance of the Destruction

"When you set your table to make a feast for guests — you diminish from it a little and leave an empty place without a dish from the dishes that are fitting to place

there. When a woman makes her jewelry — she leaves out one type of jewelry so that the jewelry should not be complete. When the groom marries — he takes ashes from a burnt offering and places them on his head in the place where tefillin are placed."

Simple meaning: At a feast one leaves an empty place without a nice dish. A woman doesn't put on all her jewelry. A groom places ashes on his head at the place of tefillin.

Novel Points:

- **In all these things in order to remember Jerusalem** — the Rambam doesn't say "the Destruction of Jerusalem" but "Jerusalem" simply. The verse is **If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand forget** — the goal is to remember Jerusalem.

- By a groom — today the custom is only a bit of ash before the chuppah, but according to the Rambam it appears that they didn't have any nice shtrimmel, just ashes on the head.

Musical Instruments — Decree Not to Play

"And similarly they decreed not to play with all musical instruments, and all types of music and all types of song it is forbidden to rejoice with them and to hear them because of the Destruction. And even song with the mouth over wine is forbidden, as it says 'with song they shall not drink wine.' All Israel has already practiced to say words of praise or songs of thanksgiving to God and the like over wine."

Simple meaning: One may not play musical instruments, and even singing while drinking wine is forbidden. But words of praise to God while drinking wine is permitted according to the custom of Israel.

Novel Points:

- A distinction is made between jewelry (where one must only diminish — not put on everything) and musical instruments (where "all of them" means one should not at all). The word "all of them" is interpreted as "their matter" — all types of musical instruments.

- **The Rambam's permission** for songs and praises is based on the custom of Israel — "all Israel has already practiced." This is a custom that the Rambam agrees to.

- **Question:** If songs and praises with the mouth are permitted, can one certainly say that songs and praises with music are also permitted? The answer: The musical instrument doesn't say any verses — only the mouth can say verses. But if one sings for the sake of attachment, it remains a question.

- **Practically:** This is another thing that no one has ever conducted themselves with — not just today. It is mentioned that in the Laws of Chanukah there is a discussion about this.

Crowns of Grooms and Brides

"And afterwards they decreed on crowns of grooms in general — that the groom should not place any wreath on his head, as it says 'Remove the turban and take off the crown.' And similarly they decreed on crowns of brides of silver and gold, but of woven material is permitted."

Simple meaning: First one only said ashes on the head (one could still have a crown). Later they decreed that a groom may not wear any wreath/crown at all. A bride may not wear crowns of silver and gold, but of fabric/sewn things one may.

Novel Points: It is a two-stage decree: First — ashes on the head (one can still have a crown); Later — no wreath at all.

Tearing Upon Jerusalem and the Cities of Judah

"One who sees the cities of Judah in their destruction says 'Your holy cities have become a wilderness' and tears. One who sees Jerusalem in its destruction says 'Our holy and beautiful house... has become a burning fire' and tears. From Tzofim. And when he reaches the Temple he tears another tear."

Simple meaning: Whoever sees the cities of Judah in their destruction tears. Whoever sees Jerusalem in its destruction tears. From Tzofim (a place from which one can see Jerusalem). At the Temple one makes another separate tearing.

Novel Points:

- **Great question for today:** Jerusalem is thank God built, we see thousands of cranes building — is it still "in its destruction"? It is said that certainly one doesn't say this text on Jerusalem today. But perhaps **at the site of the Temple** — there it is still destruction.

- **One who comes from the desert path** — whoever comes from the desert side (like when one travels to the Judean desert near the Old City), tears for the Temple first and afterwards for Jerusalem — opposite from the regular order, because he sees the Temple first.

Laws of Tearing — How

"All these tearings are all done by hand and standing. And one tears all his garments that are upon him until he reveals his heart. And one never mends these tearings. But it is permitted to baste them, to hem them, to gather them and to sew them like ladders."

Simple meaning: One tears with the hands, standing. One tears all garments until one sees the heart. One may never sew them — but temporary forms of sewing (like ladders/stitches) are permitted.

Novel Points:

- **Stringency more than regular mourning:** By regular mourning it's not so much — here it is **all his garments** (all garments, not just one garment) **until he reveals his heart**, and **one never mends** (by regular mourning one can sew after thirty days).

- "To sew them like stitches" — this is the same concept as by Chol HaMoed, a temporary way of sewing.

- **Practically:** Another thing that no one conducts themselves with — we tear a tearing, but not a tearing that is never mended, and not until he reveals his heart.

Nullification of the Fasts in the Days of Mashiach

"All these fasts are destined to be nullified in the days of Mashiach. And not only that, but they are destined to become holidays, days of joy and gladness, as it says 'Thus says the Lord of Hosts: the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah for joy and gladness and good festivals — and truth and peace love.'"

Simple meaning: When Mashiach comes all the fasts will be nullified, and even more — they will become holidays.

Novel Points:

1. **The Rambam's book is not only for our time** — he also writes laws for the days of Mashiach. One must know how to conduct oneself when Mashiach comes.

2. **"When there is peace"** — the Rambam says that now there is still not peace, because there is still not the redemption. The Rebbe (Lubavitcher Rebbe) says that Mashiach brings the peace.

3. **The Rambam in the Commentary on the Mishnah (Eight Chapters)** explains the verse "and truth and peace love": God doesn't look at whether you fast or not — He looks at whether you do **truth and peace**. **Peace** means **good character traits**, **truth** means one knows the truth — **intellectual excellence**. This is human perfection, and then one can be joyful.

4. **The Fast of Esther — will it also be nullified?** The Rambam doesn't say it clearly. Perhaps not, because it is connected to Purim which is not nullified. It has a special matter.

| Full Transcript

Laws of Fasts Chapter 5 — Fixed Fasts for All Generations: Introduction, Fast of Gedaliah, Tenth of Teves

Introduction: What is the Fifth Chapter in the Laws of Fasts?

Good, we are learning Laws of Fasts, Chapter Five, Chapter 5. We have learned until now about fasts that are not always fixed and established at the same time, but rather for a calamity or fasts for rain. We learned it at length in the last chapter, all the prayers of the fast for rain. Now we are going to learn the fasts that we know, the fasts that are always relevant in our time, the fasts that were once established forever.

And another thing that we are going to learn is, that we are going to learn, later it will discuss the days of Tisha B'Av and the days of Av. Actually, generally speaking, two more general things that I want to think about, an explanation that can be connected a bit with the topic here.

Another topic, that is, first the Rambam is going to say in this chapter the laws of the four or five, we will see, fasts that we mentioned. After that we are going to discuss laws of mourning that everyone observes during the three weeks, the nine days, these are also matters of mourning for the destruction. And after that the Rambam is going to say additional enactments that the Sages established regarding the mourning for the destruction, such as making a remembrance

for the destruction, tearing kria'h when one sees the destroyed Temple and the like.

General Explanation: Why Do We Fast Only Four Times a Year and Not the Whole Year?

And it could be that the point is like this, that we will see law aleph that the Rambam sets down. The point is, that we have learned that the entire purpose of a fast, a fast, the Rambam says, is from the ways of repentance. It is a way to awaken the world that the fact that there are troubles, this is not just random, this is because, as it says for example there, because one does not greet with shalom during the time of the later fasts, because we are like those rebuked by the Omnipresent, one must take it seriously and know that one must correct oneself.

Now, what does this mean? Now we live in a world, it is apparently the time of the destruction of the Temple, which is basically not a world at all. It is a time of exile. Exile means that the Jews have no government, and the good Jews have no government, and the evil kingdom rules, etc. Endless problems. So actually one should have established oneself, decreed a fast, and conducted oneself with all the customs, almost like the third type of fast, one must sit until they become faint, until, yes, until the redemption comes, as one should have done, as until the rain comes. Yes. This is actually stated in the Gemara, ahavah ve'emunah, there were people who did this.

And in practice one cannot do this. It seems that one must think more deeply why it means one cannot. Do it yes, perhaps Mashiach will come. Okay, it seems there are other things about this. But there are indeed certain laws that go the whole year. That is, we look at it that there is like the period of Tisha B'Av, then... no, actually the whole year, a bit like they learned, similar to what they learned. No, there is also the fast of Gedaliah and the Tenth of Teves, it goes throughout the entire period of a year. It seems to me like similar to Monday and Thursday. One cannot fast every day? The Rambam says, fast on Monday and Thursday. Okay, one cannot fast a whole year, one fasts four times a year, perhaps five times a year. Perhaps the Fast of Esther also has to do with this even. The Rambam doesn't give a reason, but it could be. One fasts several times a year, and not only does one fast, but also part of the year one conducts oneself with customs, which are customs we have already seen by the fast for rain, customs of mourning, customs of rebuke before the Omnipresent, not greeting with shalom, such things. Besides this one makes remembrances, this is all part of the same thing, to remember that there is a calamity and one must do repentance.

Old Mourning — A Dispersed Calamity

And since this is not something that... I mean to say, what I said earlier, that it is because one cannot fast a whole year, I mean there is besides this another thing, that the Gemara calls it old mourning, because it is actually not such a type of calamity, because one can survive here without a Temple. You don't tell anyone. The Gemara calls it old mourning. It is a great calamity, but it is like a dispersed calamity, it is throughout the year. It is not simply that this week, there is no difference if it is this week or next week. You understand? It is something more general. I mean that when the Rambam says for example the Seventeenth of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av, he also counts that it was not once a destruction of the Temple, but when there were sins a piece of destruction happened.

There were, he counts, five and five, yes? Yes, this exists also in our time, there is a whole calamity that we still don't have the Temple, and there are troubles from time to time. It is all about the sins that we have. Yes, okay.

Law 1: There Are Days When All Israel Fasts on Them

In short, this is apparently the context of the chapter, and thus one comes to know the laws of the fasts. The Rambam says:

There are days, there are days, when all Israel fasts on them, that all Jews, not one city, in a certain city, if there happens a time of trouble, there is some time of trouble that all Jews have, that there is no redemption. **When all Israel fasts on them**, okay, **because of the troubles that occurred on them**. But one doesn't say redemption, but yes. Because of the troubles that happened to them, that happened on these days. **In order to awaken the hearts**. Why? The Rambam says, why does one do on these days? Yes. Why does one fast? Because as we know that fasting is to awaken. **In order to awaken the hearts**, to awaken the hearts, **and to open the ways of repentance**, to open the ways of repentance. It means like we remember that the fast itself is not repentance. The fast is only to break the heart, and afterwards one should do repentance. Repentance itself is fixing the deeds.

Question: What Do You Want From Me? My Grandfathers Sinned!

Someone will ask a question, this is an act that our grandfathers did, we did not sin to make the destruction of the Temple, some grandfather from the time of then did this, what do you want from me?

The Rambam says, **and this shall be a remembrance of our evil deeds**, this should remind us of our evil deeds. Why? Because **the deeds of our fathers were like our deeds now**, just as our fathers had sins that brought troubles, we also have sins, we also have evil deeds. He says thus, remember our evil and our deeds of our fathers, that they do the same thing that we do. **But we and our fathers have sinned**. Yes, so we said, he is going to bring a verse. **Until it caused them and us those troubles**. Just as our fathers did sins, and the sins caused them troubles, and we are also continuing. We do sins, and it causes us troubles. The same. Because we, it is like the Gemara says, anyone in whose days the Temple was not built, it is as if it was destroyed in his days, such a thing.

The Purpose of Remembering: Repentance

He says, why? What is the purpose of remembering? Just to become sad? He says, no, **when one remembers these things**, when we remember these things. So, **in order to improve**, we will do repentance and remember to return to good, **as it says**, as it says **and they shall confess their iniquity**, and what is **and the iniquity of their fathers**? What is the point of the iniquity of their fathers? Because the iniquity of their fathers is the iniquity of their fathers, remembering our weakness. And not just remembering, because if we grasp that we are still in the same trouble that our grandfather had, why are we in the same trouble that our grandfather had, still doing the same sin that they already did? They say vidui, and vidui is certainly not the point just to say vidui, but rather vidui is because one should do repentance, one does repentance on our iniquities and our iniquities and our iniquities, as the verse says further, afterwards the Almighty will have mercy through this.

Innovation: Sins Are the Default Without Awakening

I mean it is an interesting thing, many times people feel uncomfortable with mentioning the sins of the grandfathers. I mean the point here is, that a person's natural tendency is that if he doesn't make an accounting of the soul, if he is not fully in control, he falls to sins automatically. So as long as one doesn't make the remembrance, the awakening, sins happen automatically. Just as it was with our grandfathers who had sins until they awakened themselves. Yes, mentioning the sins is to remind that without awakening sins happen. Yes, without repentance sins happen. The sins are the default. This is not what it says here though. It says here that we are in the ground, and why are we in the ground? Because we, our grandfathers, did the same thing, and when one remembers this, one will do repentance, and will fix the problem. Mashiach will come, whatever, will fix the problem.

Law 2: What Are the Days?

The Rambam says, what are the days? The days are thus, four days.

Fast of Gedaliah — 3rd of Tishrei

It is thus, the first is **the third day of Tishrei**, three days in Tishrei. What is the day? This is the day **when Gedaliah ben Achikam was killed**. And what is the problem? It is one person? No, it was not a one person thing, it was a calamity of the many. Why? Because **the ember of Israel that remained was extinguished**. Gedaliah was the leader of Israel, or one of the leaders of Israel in his time. When he was killed, yes, and afterwards they began to rekindle the light again. No, it was the light of the world. The last group of Jews who were still in the Land of Israel, who still had a bit of a leader, was Gedaliah. Ah, very good. The fire is no longer burning, but there is still a bit of a coal, it is still neither here nor there. Therefore he says, there still remained some Jewishness, some Jews. And when he was killed, all the Jews fled, as it says in the story there. Then was the last blow. The final blow of the destruction of the Temple was Gedaliah.

And caused the completion of their exile. So when Gedaliah, who was the last of the Jews who still survived and who still held on, when he was killed the coal was extinguished. And caused, and this brought **the completion of their exile**, that the exile should extend so long, the exile should be so great. Completion means to complete their exile, that is the finish, this is the final blow. That is, as long as there was still Gedaliah, one could have still turned back. I am speaking of the First Temple, it was already turned back by the way. But this ended, I mean this was the final seal as it were of the exile of the First Temple.

The Rambam's Innovation: The Ember of Israel Was Extinguished — Not Just the Death of the Righteous

This piece of Rambam, I just want to say why. The learners hold in one view that the Rambam makes his own explanations on the Gemara. The Gemara says on this, **to teach you that the death of the righteous is equivalent to the burning of the House of our God**. That Gedaliah was a righteous person, and there was a wicked person, yes, Yishmael killed him there, and one makes a fast on both, both on the fast of Gedaliah and also the fast of Tisha B'Av, to learn that the death of the righteous is as severe as the destruction of the Temple.

But the Rambam learned into this that not just a righteous person dies like the destruction of the Temple, every righteous

person who dies one makes a fast. The Rambam learned that since the righteous person, Gedaliah, he was the leader of the Jews in that time after the destruction, when he died it became like again the destruction that completed the seal of their exile, therefore it is such a calamity. This the Rambam learned as the explanation in the matter. Yes.

Tenth of Teves — The Siege on Jerusalem

What are the words? **The tenth of Teves, when the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar the wicked, leaned upon Jerusalem.** You mean leaned, he leaned? I don't know. He leaned, you mean he took the... he made a siege around Jerusalem. Okay. Like yes, he brought Jerusalem **in siege and in distress**. He brought Jerusalem in a siege... this is a language of a verse from the writings. In siege and in distress in the rebuke, yes. He surrounded Jerusalem. So it could be that it began on the tenth of Teves, and it ended...

Seventeenth of Tammuz

And the seventeenth of Tammuz, the next fast is the seventeenth of Tammuz. What happened on the seventeenth of Tammuz?

Seventeenth of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av – Five Things Occurred on Them

Seventeenth of Tammuz – Five Things (Continued)

Speaker 1:

And he goes according to the order of the generations. **On it the Tablets were broken** when Moshe Rabbeinu came down.

It is interesting, the breaking of the Tablets is not itself the tragedy, the tragedy is the Golden Calf, upon which was the breaking of the Tablets. You can ask the same question about the Temple, the tragedy is the sins that were done. No, the tragedy is the problem. When you had a Golden Calf without Tablets, it is not really the same thing, because the breaking of the Tablets was something that Moshe Rabbeinu chose to do, as a punishment. The Almighty chose to destroy the Temple, as a punishment.

And the daily offering was discontinued in the First Temple. The daily offering ended in the First Temple. That is, even before the destruction there was one day, the seventeenth of Tammuz, when they gathered together sheep to be able to make the offering. That is that the Temple is still going on, and on the seventeenth of Tammuz the animals for the offerings ran out, and the daily offering stopped. This was a great calamity. That is that the Temple service, yes.

And Jerusalem was breached in the Second destruction, and in the Second destruction then it happened that the enemy prevailed and the city was breached. The walls, the Romans threw catapults at the great walls of Jerusalem, and on the seventeenth of Tammuz they finally succeeded in breaking the wall.

And later Apostomus the wicked burned a Torah scroll. There was a wicked Apostomus, who was one of the Roman generals, and he burned a Torah scroll. It was a great... whoever it was, whoever it was. No one knows who it was, by the way.

And I can imagine, it was not one of the nice people. Yes. **He placed an idol in the Sanctuary.** The Rambam learns that the same Apostomus, not Menashe, not... so the Rambam learns. It says in the Mishnah thus, the Rambam had this

version, it seems, that the same Apostomus placed an idol in the Sanctuary. Who was this? Who knows. Some scoundrel, what should I tell you, some difference.

This is the seventeenth of Tammuz, yes? We fast on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

Tisha B'Av – Five Things

And Tisha B'Av? Tisha B'Av also **five things occurred on it**. On both of these things the Gemara says, yes, that it is a liable day, that misfortune is brought upon a liable day. The day had in it, it is a bad day that brought upon itself punishments. Yes.

What happened on this day? **"On it was decreed upon Israel in the wilderness that they would not enter the Land of Israel"**. There it says, after the spies returned, **"and the people wept that night"**, it was decreed **"that they would not enter the Land of Israel"**, it still lasted that the generation of the wilderness should die out in the wilderness.

"And the House was destroyed the first time", the Temple was destroyed the first time, **"and the second time"**, and the second time. It is a third thing. And the second time, yes. **"And the second time"**, and the second time.

"And it was captured" – it is interesting, by both, the seventeenth of Tammuz by both was the beginning of the destruction, as the daily offering was discontinued, therefore there was no longer the service, and the second time the wall was breached. And by both was, Tisha B'Av by both was the end of the calamity. Yes, one must know that, in short, whoever will learn the sources of this will see that it is complicated, there are other dates in the verses, God forbid.

Beitar Was Captured

"A great city was captured", a great Jewish city was captured, **"and Beitar was its name"**. You see in your version it says Beitar, but in other versions it says Beit Tur was its name. There is such a place, let's say. **"And there were in it thousands and myriads of Israel."** It was a city full of sages, yes? No, not Yavneh, Beitar. Thousands and tens, in short, many Jews. **"Thousands and myriads of Israel"**, it was a great Jewish city.

"And they had a great king" – ah, he speaks here of the story of Ben Koziba. **"And they had a great king"** – here we are speaking already after the destruction of the Temple. By both times when you speak, the Rambam speaks everything, he goes according to the order of the generations from the Mishnah already. Here, what was here? It was already several years after the destruction of the Temple, the Jews - Jerusalem was already destroyed, but they made a great city Beitar, and they took up a king who was called Bar Kochba.

And all Israel and the great Sages imagined, all Jews and the great Sages - one presumably hints to be about Rabbi Akiva and other Sages of the generation - imagined, thought **that he was the King Mashiach**, he is the revealed King Mashiach. But in practice it did not happen, he was not Mashiach, **and he fell into the hands of the nations and they were all killed. And it was a great calamity like the destruction of the Temple.**

Why was it such a tragedy like the destruction of the Temple?

Why does the language of Chazal (our Sages) say that it was such a kind of tragedy like the destruction of the Temple? Perhaps because thousands upon thousands were killed, and

about the Beit HaMikdash (Temple) it says it was wood and stones. Perhaps he has a source for this, but it was a great destruction.

Like the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash? The Rambam wants to describe, because in the Mishnah it says **"Beitar was captured."** What is this Beitar? Who has heard of it? The Rambam gives you the background, as is his way to give the background of the sugya (Talmudic passage) that's missing to understand. That this wasn't just some city that happened to be, there were many cities in history that happened to be lost. This was the city where they thought already that it was the Mashiach, and it was a tremendous tragedy, it was like the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. This is the Rambam's... it seems to me that this is the Rambam's definition.

Turnus Rufus Plowed the Temple

And on that day that was prepared for calamity, the day that was already prepared for calamity, there also happened a tragedy, that **Turnus Rufus the wicked from the kings of Edom plowed**, Turnus Rufus from the kings of Edom - Edom means here Rome - plowed **the Temple and its surroundings**, but what was still left from the Beit HaMikdash he completely finished destroying.

And with this happened, **to fulfill** - it's interesting, because Turnus Rufus did this not to fulfill, he didn't say for the sake of fulfilling **"Zion shall be plowed as a field."** But when this happened it was fulfilled, the Almighty let him do this to show us that He fulfills the verse **"Zion shall be plowed as a field."**

The city was captured, the story is, basically, who Turnus Rufus is, it's a funny name, it could be it comes from some general who was called Rufus, it's a Roman name. Among the Romans there was a custom, when they would found a new city, the procedure was that the king, or whoever the ruler, would take a plow-iron and make the first plowing, because a city needs a foundation. And this was the procedure for making a cornerstone.

So after they conquered Jerusalem, actually after the destruction of Beitar, Hadrian basically... why it says here Turnus Rufus I don't know, but Hadrian, he decided that they must teach a lesson to the Judeans, to the Jews, once and for all. So he took Jerusalem and he made it into a pagan city, Aelia Capitolina, right? He made a temple for Jupiter on the Beit HaMikdash and so forth.

And the way they were supposedly founding a city of Jerusalem, a Roman city, and the founding procedure was that they make the plowing. And this he did on Tisha B'Av. He also knew. By the way, perhaps this is the meaning of **"prepared for calamity,"** because the wicked one knew, he did it deliberately, exactly. Just like Hamas came on Simchat Torah? It's a custom of the wicked of Israel. A perverse kind of thing. But anyway... perversely, to disturb a joy.

In short, he knew, he wanted to calculate. Just like by Haman it says clearly calculated when it came. He calculated to do the thing so that it should humiliate the Jews. Therefore it's also a great tragedy, it's not just random. You say, the Gemara... destruction, it was a new humiliation for the Jews, that they made here a pagan city on the place of the Temple.

Discussion: The Events Lasted More Than One Day

But I still maintain that many of these things lasted more than one day. For example, the killing in Beitar took several days.

Since Tisha B'Av is such a symbolic day, they established it. Every event can be captured from several times. When was the Second World War? One can calculate when Hitler declared, one can calculate when he broke through the wall, and so forth. So because it's a day designated for calamity, they attributed it to that day.

If according to what I say that the plowing was specifically a symbolic thing, presumably later they continued plowing, I don't know, but the beginning was indeed specifically Tisha B'Av, literally. By any thing, the first day or the last day or the first day, I don't know why you're getting stuck on this.

You say the Rambam further, "**four hundred years Israelites**," the four mentioned... it's always in the summer that wars happened, that's the order. So you see that everything is Tisha B'Av, it's not even on the level to make.

Law 4 - The Four Fasts Explicit in the Prophetic Tradition

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, **these four fast days**, the four mentioned fast days, the tenth of Tevet, the seventeenth of Tammuz, the Fast of Gedaliah, and Tisha B'Av, **behold they are explicit in the prophetic tradition**, it's written explicitly in the Writings, it says in a verse in Zechariah, it says calculated four days that are called fasts, **"the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth."** It says basically that it will be good, but here we see that it exists.

Says the Rambam, what are the fasts? **The fast of the fourth** is the fourth month, meaning that all these "fourth" means the month. **The fast of the fourth is the seventeenth of Tammuz which is in the fourth month. The fast of the fifth is Tisha B'Av which is in the fifth month**, the month of Av. **The fast of the seventh is the third of Tishrei which is the seventh month. And the fast of the tenth is the tenth of Tevet which is in the tenth month.**

Says the Rambam, all these are matters of fasts, they are fasts that are mentioned in the prophetic writings, just like everything that we learn from the prophetic writings.

Law 5 - The Fast of Esther

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, besides this there is another fast which is a custom. **The custom of all Israel in these times is to fast on the thirteenth of Adar**, all Jews conduct themselves to add another fast, and this is thirteen days in Adar. Why? That one.

The Fast of Esther, Dispute Between Rambam and Ramban About Four Fasts, and Laws of the Week in Which Tisha B'Av Falls

The Fast of Esther - The Fast of Haman

Speaker 1: In the times of Haman - interesting, we call it the Fast of Esther, the Rambam calls it the Fast of Haman. It's because the tragedy happened because of Haman. It depends how you look at it. You can look at it positively, a day when the salvation that came later was accomplished, it's called the Fast of Esther. Or you can say the day when they fasted because there was a great tragedy, it's called the Fast of Haman.

Apparently, the Rambam will learn that today such Hamans can also arise, and there's still a tremendous reason why not.

Very good. So Rabbi Yitzchak said very well, that the Rambam began that today we also do sins, therefore because of this all these fasts are important.

Dispute of the Early Authorities - Obligation of Four Fasts in Our Time

The Version of the Maggid Mishneh

And here it's important to mention that the dispute of the early authorities, how to mention the dispute of the Rambam? Let's accept here the Maggid Mishneh's version. That is, the Maggid Mishneh says here that he had a different version in the Rambam, apparently an error. But he meant that the Rambam's language of **"the custom of all Israel in these times"** - "these times" doesn't refer to present days. Present days? These generations. That's how we learn. But he meant, because he perhaps had a different version, that it means all these fasts. He understood that the Rambam means here like the Ramban.

The Position of the Ramban - Fasts in Our Time Are Custom

Let's mention. In the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah it says, so comes out the conclusion of the Gemara there, that regarding the four fasts, the Gemara brings a contradiction in the prophet. The prophet says that they shouldn't fast, why is it a fast? Says the Gemara that it depends. If there's peace, then they don't fast, if they don't want to they don't have to fast. If it's a time of persecution, then they must indeed fast. So it says in the Gemara. And the Gemara says that Tisha B'Av is the exception, troubles have multiplied upon it. Therefore it says in the Mishnah **"on Av because of the fast,"** because Tisha B'Av is required. Tisha B'Av anyway fast even if there is indeed peace.

Now, there's a dispute of early authorities, when is he speaking, what does the Gemara mean? The Ramban, so is apparently the simple plain meaning of the Gemara, says, he learns, that what it says that there are the four fasts, this is not an obligation in our time to fast, this is only an obligation if there's a tragedy. If there's no tragedy, one doesn't have to fast if one doesn't want to. Except for Tisha B'Av, which one must fast anyway because troubles have multiplied upon it, could be because of the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, whatever. This is the position of the Ramban.

And therefore asks the Ramban, why do we fast today? All Jews know that it says in the Shulchan Aruch that one fasts? Learns the Ramban, because this is the custom. What does "Israel practiced" mean? They accepted upon themselves responsibility. Doesn't it say in the Gemara "they desired"? Who desired? The people decided that they indeed want to fast, even when it's not specifically a time, really a time of war and so forth.

The Position of the Ramban - "Peace" Means When There Is a Temple

But the Rambam, it says in the first Commentary on the Mishnah, learned differently. The Rambam learned that what it says in the Gemara "peace" doesn't mean that there's exactly now peace among Jews, there are no troubles from gentiles. "Peace" means when there is a Beit HaMikdash, "no peace" means when there is no Beit HaMikdash.

Therefore, according to the Rambam it's not a custom to fast the four fasts, it's a complete rabbinic obligation, because as long as there's no Beit HaMikdash, and this fits very well what the Rambam explains, that this is the sin of our fathers that

causes that we don't have a government, whatever it is, we fast basically on this. And what it says in the Gemara, that when there is peace, doesn't mean just peace, in the time of the Second Temple, when there is a Beit HaMikdash.

The Rambam has a very high definition of peace. Peace, ah, the gentile leaves me in peace, very nice. He doesn't leave me my kingdom, he leaves me in my little ghetto not to be killed. That's called peace? Peace means when he lets me be a nation with a Beit HaMikdash.

Practical Difference - In the Time of the Second Temple They Fasted Tisha B'Av

It comes out from the Rambam an interesting novelty, he doesn't say it here, but it's not relevant, but the Rambam comes out that in the time of the Second Temple they fasted Tisha B'Av. Why? Because this comes out according to the calculation. He says, when there is peace, even then they fast Tisha B'Av. On Tisha B'Av, yes. It comes out that in the Second Temple they fasted on Tisha B'Av. On what? On the fact that there was no complete peace, there was no Divine Presence etc. So learns the Rambam.

Return to the Version of the Maggid Mishneh

And the Maggid Mishneh thought that the Rambam is like the Ramban, but it's clear, in the Commentary on the Mishnah it's clear that the Rambam holds differently. The Rambam holds that it is indeed an obligation.

Speaker 2: No, the Maggid Mishneh had a version "**and all Israel practiced in these times**". That all these things are a custom.

Speaker 1: You say, that this is only an error, or it's only according to that version. But simply the Rambam means to say that all these that were just mentioned are **explicit in the prophetic tradition**. So it's very clear. Explicit in the prophetic tradition means that it's a mitzvah. When the Rambam means that it's only a custom, says the Rambam further, I mean that this is agreed, the Fast of Esther everyone agrees that it's indeed only a custom, it's not... not clear at all what is the meaning of it. But only we say that **a remembrance of the fast that they fasted in the days of Haman, the matters of the fasts and their cry**, he means to say that here we see that Esther wrote it down for the Jews, he sent to the Jews that they should know the matters of the fasts, if they should repeat it.

Law 5 - The Fast of Esther That Falls on Shabbat

Says the Rambam further, what happens when the fast is on Shabbat? Yes, what do I mention the custom, the seventeenth of Tammuz, excuse me, the thirteenth of Adar, if it falls on Shabbat, **we advance it**, we make the fast a day earlier, we make it Thursday, we **fast on Thursday which is the eleventh. But one of the four fast days that fall on Shabbat**, one of the other fasts, **we postpone it until after Shabbat**, we push it off until after Shabbat. **If they fall on Friday, we fast on Friday.**

I mean the point is because there's a concept that we don't advance calamity, but the Fast of Esther is not a calamity, it's only a matter of remembering the remembrance of the fast that they fasted in the days of Haman. The other reason that we can indeed advance it, is simply that it will work out. Also, we see in Purim that we advance the Megillah. Purim is indeed something that can be advanced. And the Rambam is not here.

Law 5 (Continued) - Laws of All Fasts

On all these fasts, what do we do on all these fasts? **We don't sound the alarm**, we don't blow the shofar. It's a whole type at the end earlier, but there's no shofar blowing, there's no Ne'ilah prayer. What is there? There is **Torah reading also at Shacharit and Minchah**, even if it's not Monday or Thursday, there's a Torah reading of **Vayechal Moshe**.

Interesting, the thirteen attributes of mercy correspond with the thirteen fasts that we said earlier. Okay, it has no connection.

No, although at a normal fast one must read the rebuke, but on the contrary on these fasts we don't read the rebuke, but Vayechal Moshe. Tisha B'Av also not that, Tisha B'Av we read in the morning according to the order of the sons.

I mean the Rambam, what happens? We in the previous previous we learned that there are certain fasts that already begin like Yom Kippur would a day before. He says, **and on all of them we don't eat or drink at night, except for Tisha B'Av**. Tisha B'Av one may not already from the final meal, all others may eat at night.

So, we've finished with the fasts.

Laws of When Av Enters - The Week in Which Tisha B'Av Falls

Now we're going to learn more things about the days around Tisha B'Av. We already begin to be in distress and destruction. Says the Rambam, **when Av enters we diminish joy**. We already begin to be less joyful, we are less in joy. **And the week in which Tisha B'Av falls within it**, the week of Tisha B'Av. Does week mean Shabbat or does it mean the week? The week of Tisha B'Av. **It is forbidden**, yes, on Shabbat we don't cut hair. **It is forbidden to cut hair and to launder**, we don't cut hair and we don't wash. We don't wash laundry. **And it is forbidden to wear pressed garments**, we don't put on any ironed, freshly pressed garments. **Even linen garments**. Because linen garments always need ironing. It means, even a garment where ironing is not a luxury, but it's important for it, is also forbidden.

Speaker 2: Until the fast passes.

Speaker 1: Okay, because in ironing there's no... on the contrary, linen means not ironed, it's something else. But nevertheless, **until the fast passes** until after Tisha B'Av. Meaning from the beginning of Av until after Tisha B'Av, from the week of Tisha B'Av until after Tisha B'Av.

Says the Rambam, the washing is not only the prohibition that one shouldn't have new laundry, but the prohibition of the washing itself, **even to wash and leave for after the fast is forbidden**. I mean that the language is that one shouldn't remove one's mind from the mourning or what? Yes. One should continue.

Customs in the Week in Which Tisha B'Av Falls

Israel already practiced, it's already... they already conducted themselves, Jews already conducted themselves. These laws one must do. But there's a custom, not to eat meat on Shabbat, not to eat meat on that week, on the week of Tisha B'Av. **And they don't enter the bathhouse, until the fast passes**, they shouldn't enter the bathhouse. This is also not an obligation, but a custom.

Speaker 2: No, he didn't say to wash oneself, he said to wash laundry.

Speaker 1: He says that the person shouldn't wash, but happy is he who passes the fast. This is the custom in the week.

And there are places that have an even greater custom, **to cancel slaughtering from the beginning of the month until the fast.** Not only the week of... no, not only that one doesn't eat meat, but also that one doesn't slaughter at all. And not only from the week of Tisha B'Av, but also from Rosh Chodesh.

But apparently, to cancel slaughtering is the same thing, because if one doesn't slaughter, how can one eat? There's smoked meat, there's jerky, there are things that one can keep.

Law 7 - Tisha B'Av Its Night Is Like Its Day

Okay, so these are the laws of between... until here laws of the week in which Tisha B'Av falls. Now he's going to speak a bit about the order of the day of Tisha B'Av. Says the Rambam, **Tisha B'Av its night is like its day for everything.** It's not simple that the fast begins in the morning, but the fast is like its day for everything, regarding all other things. **And one doesn't eat except while it's still day, and its twilight is forbidden like Yom Kippur.** There's a concept like the addition to Yom Kippur, there's also that from twilight one already doesn't eat.

The Final Meal - Distinction Between Custom and Law

Says the Rambam further, how does one conduct oneself on the eve of Tisha B'Av regarding eating? Says the Rambam, **and one shouldn't eat meat and shouldn't drink wine in the final meal.** Earlier he said the custom. The custom is not to eat meat in the week of Tisha B'Av. Now he says the prohibition. The prohibition is not to eat meat in the final meal. Even one who is lenient to indeed eat meat in the week of Tisha B'Av, but from the final meal and onward one doesn't eat meat.

Laws of Tisha B'Av – The Final Meal, The Practice of the Early Pious Ones, and the Prohibitions of the Day

The Final Meal – Distinction Between Before Midday and After Midday

Speaker 1: And one should not eat two cooked dishes at the final meal. That is, one eats only one thing.

When does this restriction apply? What did the Rambam say? **"If one ate on the eve of Tisha B'Av after midday,"** if one already ate after midday, once one has eaten the final meal, one eats no more.

"But if one ate before midday," generally, at that time one may not eat all those things, the meat with the two cooked dishes and the like. But if one ate before midday, if the meal was before midday, before midday there is no restriction of only one cooked dish, **"even though one does not eat afterwards,"** even if one doesn't eat later, nevertheless one may eat whatever one wishes.

Eve of Tisha B'Av That Falls on Shabbos / Tisha B'Av That Falls on Shabbos

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, **"And the eve of Tisha B'Av that falls on Shabbos,"** then one doesn't make any... on Shabbos there is no mourning. **"One eats and drinks all one's needs, and brings to one's table even like the feast of Solomon,"** one may bring to the table great meat and fish and all delicacies.

But what do the Hagahos Maimoniyos say about this? Because there were indeed those who went about weekly and so forth, I

know, in Ashkenaz. Okay. There are many details of customs that we have regarding this topic, but we're not going to learn that now, only what stands in the Rambam.

The Rambam says, **"And likewise Tisha B'Av itself that falls on Shabbos,"** when we push it off until after Tisha B'Av, what is Tisha B'Av itself? **"One lacks nothing,"** one makes a regular Shabbos, without anything, nothing is lacking.

The Practice of All the People vs. The Early Pious Ones

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, what I have now enumerated that on the eve of Tisha B'Av one may eat, if before midday one may still eat two foods and the like, **"and this is the practice of all the people,"** and this is a leniency, **"who are unable to be in suffering,"** it is enough that one observes the stringencies that I have enumerated.

"But the early pious ones" were much more stringent, the great ones made a much more broken state. **"Thus did the early pious ones do."**

About whom does this refer? Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai. About Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai. The Rambam brings Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai several times, and always calls him "the early pious ones." He doesn't say Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai. In the Gemara it already states that the early pious ones is Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai, but the Rambam doesn't bring any names, so he just says that. Perhaps he brings it because of this.

The Level of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai

Speaker 1: Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai always expressed with his "body language" feelings. "It seemed to him as if the Name of Hosts," here too "it seemed as if his deceased lay before him." As the blessed Name had, this was his level. Just as the righteous looked at his face, as we saw yesterday at the yahrzeit.

Details of the Practice of the Early Pious Ones

Speaker 1: On the eve of Tisha B'Av **"they bring to a person alone,"** for each person. It already states that they didn't eat together, just as the custom was not to make a zimun, each one eats alone.

"They brought him dry bread with salt," they brought him dry bread, they didn't put any butter on it, no things, just a bit of salt. **"and he dips it in water,"** one does dip it in water. It already states earlier that it is dry.

Okay, I don't know.

Speaker 2: Yes, because it's dry one can't eat it. One dips it with water, yes.

Speaker 1: **"and he sits between the oven and the stove,"** one eats in such a manner of temporary dwelling **"and eats it."** Perhaps it's a disgusting place. This is indeed the ashes of disgrace, that's what I wanted to say.

"and he drinks upon it a jug of water," he drinks water after eating the bread. I don't know, one needs to have enough fluid for the fast. I mean that he doesn't drink any wine or any good drinks, only water.

"in distress," and the whole thing he does in distress, **"in desolation,"** with such brokenness, **"and in weeping, like one whose deceased lies before him."** Like someone whose... his deceased. It's not someone else's deceased, it's not some trouble that happened once, but it's his deceased, his situation.

The Rambam's Conclusion About the Early Pious Ones

Speaker 1: Interestingly, I think this is the third time I remember the Rambam bringing a story of Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai. The Rambam says, why does the Gemara tell it? Because **"it is fitting for scholars to do thus, or close to this."** Not everyone is at this level, but at least something, one should see that it's a sad thing.

The Ramban's Testimony

Speaker 1: And the Ramban relates, this is one of the times that the Ramban relates a story. The Ramban says, "And I have exerted myself and I am from the early pious ones, and in my days I never ate on the eve of Tisha B'Av a cooked dish, even of lentils." By us we never, never was I more lenient. Simply "in my days" means that also by his father it was so, it already states from childhood. We didn't eat any cooked dish, just as Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai only ate bread with salt with a bit of water. "Even of lentils," even lentils which is a cheap food, yes.

One may not eat from any Shabbos worker. Yes, on no Shabbos worker. On Shabbos yes, even the Rambam ate a normal meal on Shabbos. Already.

Pregnant and Nursing Women on Tisha B'Av

Speaker 1: The Ramban says further, "And pregnant and nursing women fast and complete the fast on Tisha B'Av." Also pregnant and nursing women fast and complete the fast on Tisha B'Av, a full day, not like we learned generally.

It's not obvious, because all other fasts we learned... No, pregnant and nursing women we learned... about eating how much is lacking for the child. Yes, that was stated by the previous fast for rain, but generally the three fasts, pregnant and nursing women are not obligated.

The Ramban About a Sick Person

Speaker 1: And here the Maggid Mishneh brings the Ramban, that what it says pregnant and nursing women must mean when they are not sick. Simply a pregnant and nursing woman. But a sick person, the Ramban says, even if there's no danger, he won't die, nothing will happen, but a sick person the Sages did not decree, says the Ramban, even on Tisha B'Av.

Discussion: Connection to the Ramban's Other Dispute

Speaker 2: What does this have to do with his other dispute?

Speaker 1: Presumably, once the Ramban says it's only a custom, he is presumably lenient. Because on Tisha B'Av he certainly agrees... One is certainly lenient for a sick person.

Speaker 2: No, there is a dispute. The Rambam said that a pregnant woman must fast, but the Ramban doesn't know of a dispute.

Speaker 1: No, the Rambam doesn't say in a manner that it's a sick person. The Rambam doesn't need a sick person. But I already said, a sick person one is lenient even by Torah laws like Sukkah.

Speaker 2: I didn't say.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Prohibitions of Tisha B'Av: Washing, Anointing, Wearing Shoes, Marital Relations

Speaker 1: "And it is forbidden in washing," one may not also on Tisha B'Av it is forbidden in washing. What kind of washing? **"Whether in hot water or in cold, even to put one's finger in water."** Even just to stick in a finger.

He continues, **"and it is forbidden in anointing for pleasure,"** one may also not anoint oneself for pleasure. Another thing, we learned this earlier, that washing outside one may yes, if one is dirty one may of course be.

"And in wearing shoes and in marital relations," just like Yom Kippur.

Work on Tisha B'Av

Speaker 1: And what happens regarding doing work on Tisha B'Av? He says, this already has to do with custom. The Rambam says, **"A place where they are accustomed to do work, they do,"** if the place is yes to do work, one may yes. **"A place where they are accustomed not to do work, they don't do,"** one should not change the custom. But Torah scholars are always particular about this custom, not the custom, it is fitting for them. **"And in every place Torah scholars are idle on it,"** even the Torah scholars are everywhere idle.

The Rambam says, **"And the Sages said that anyone who does work on it will never see a sign of blessing,"** he will not see any sign of blessing in that work.

Greeting on Tisha B'Av

Speaker 1: **"One does not greet one another on Tisha B'Av,"** just as we learned earlier regarding other fasts, not fasts, regarding the time after the fast for rain. **"But they sit mournful and sighing like mourners for a mother,"** like people who are mourners for their mother.

Discussion: Version – "Like Mourners for a Mother" vs. "Like Mourners"

Speaker 2: Like mourners for a mother. Like mourners, no, I think there's been added an alef, like mourners. Like mourners, certainly?

Speaker 1: Yes. In my version it states plain like mourners.

Speaker 2: No, an alef fell in, no?

Speaker 1: No, why should it fall in?

Speaker 2: Where does it fall?

Speaker 1: I'm telling you, what bothers you that it states so? Like mourners for a mother?

Speaker 2: It's a language in a verse.

Speaker 1: Yes, it's a metaphor. Certainly. Yes?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: What bothers you?

Speaker 2: Which version is this?

Speaker 1: Like mourners is very good. Like mourners is perfect. Like mourners is the true version.

How to Treat an Am Ha'aretz Who Says Shalom

Speaker 1: Okay, the Rambam says, what we learned earlier, he even has a note on it. Torah scholars understand that one doesn't greet because I'm angry at you, but an am ha'aretz, he won't bring in the whole politics. If an am ha'aretz said shalom, but it's indeed a fast of troubles, **"one responds to him with a soft voice and with a heavy head,"** one answers him back shalom in such a weak way, so that he should catch that something is wrong.

He'll ask, "Why did he give me such a soft voice?" "Ah, because today one doesn't say shalom." On today one says, he gives him shalom with the tip of the finger. Punctually he'll become a drop less of an am ha'aretz, he'll go back and learn one law.

Torah Study on Tisha B'Av

Speaker 1: What is to read on Tisha B'Av in Torah or in Prophets or in Writings? On Tisha B'Av one doesn't read Torah, and also one doesn't study. One could have said "to read" and then "to study" in Mishnah in laws in Talmud and aggados. One doesn't learn any Tanach, and not any Mishnah or laws. It doesn't mean any Mishnayos, and not any Rambam, and not any Gemara, and not any aggadic Gemara.

What yes? **"And one reads only"** things that mention troubles. Job, which brings troubles. **"And in lamentations"** he means Jeremiah, yes? What is lamentations? Eichah, Jeremiah. **"And in the bad things in Jeremiah."** Lamentations means the book of Eichah, and the Sages used to call it the book of lamentations. Right.

Children of the Study House

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, **"And children of the study house are idle on it."** Children of the study house, one doesn't now make a cheder to learn Job. One doesn't make any cheder at all.

Tefillin on Tisha B'Av

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, **"Some Sages were accustomed not to put on tefillin on it."** There are also those who have a custom not to put on tefillin. We make a compromise that one puts on tefillin at Mincha, yes? After midday.

The Rambam looks like one may put on tefillin. The Rambam holds that a mourner it states that he may not put on tefillin. But the Rambam says that the Sages conduct themselves not to put on. That is, one may if one wants, but there is such a custom. And yes, our custom is that one puts on at Mincha. It's a different custom.

Laws of Remembrance of the Destruction – Building

Speaker 1: The Rambam says other things, besides Tisha B'Av there are things that are year-round matters of remembrance of the destruction. The Rambam says, **"When the Temple was destroyed, the Sages of that generation decreed,"** when the Temple was destroyed, the Sages of that generation decreed, **"that one should never build a building plastered and whitewashed like the buildings of kings."** Plastered and whitewashed. Plastered means one painted with plaster, and whitewashed is etched into the walls. Plaster is something that... whatever, something that one covers the walls. Something fancy. That is, a normal person doesn't have this. That is, only a king has it. Okay.

Discussion: What is "Buildings of Kings" Today?

Speaker 2: So it must be, not like today where everyone has buildings of kings.

Speaker 1: No, I don't agree. There is a normal way, there is a way that kings build. One may not make a royal house. Once a wealthy person has a royal house, inside his house one will not make.

Speaker 2: I didn't say.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Laws of Remembrance of the Destruction and Cancellation of the Fasts in Messianic Times

Law 12: Plastered and Whitewashed Building — A Cubit by a Cubit

The Rambam's Words: "When the Temple was destroyed, the Sages of that generation decreed that one should never build a building plastered and whitewashed like the buildings of kings, but one plasters one's house with clay and plaster with lime, and leaves a space of a cubit by a cubit opposite the entrance without lime."

Plastered means one painted with plaster, and whitewashed is etched into the walls. Plaster is something that... whatever, something one covers the walls, it's a fancy thing. That is, a normal person doesn't have this. That is, only kings. Okay, so it must be. Not like today where everyone has... it's not paint, because everyone has a building of kings. No, I don't agree. There is a normal way, and there is a way that kings build. One may not make a royal house. Once a wealthy person has a royal house. He is inside his house, with plaster and plaster with lime. You know, he does put clay and lime, **"and leaves a space of a cubit by a cubit opposite the entrance without lime."** And even that one leaves completely unpainted, completely without lime.

The Ramban's Words: One Who Purchased a Plastered and Whitewashed Courtyard

The Ramban says, it doesn't mean here to say that one must now, if someone bought from a gentile he must now break it. It's only that one shouldn't invest so much, one should remember a bit the pain. But in any case, **"one who purchased a plastered and whitewashed courtyard, it remains in its state,"** he can leave it so, **"and we don't obligate him to peel the walls,"** to peel the walls. This is the Ramban, because one learns indeed in Megillas Esther that Haman's house Mordechai received. What does one see that one must now destroy the house? Already.

Story with the Sanz Rebbe

The custom didn't do any of these things. What the custom is, the custom is still... Yes, the Divrei Chaim asked... What, there are two Jews in the world who remember it? The Divrei Chaim asked R' Ahrale Kolomayer to tell him mussar, he was indeed a mussar speaker, so he told him that he forgot to leave a cubit by a cubit. What did the Sanz Rebbe answer? That in his heart he always remembers. What did the Sanz Rebbe do? Yes, he began to be particular the Rebbe. What does one see from this? That even the holy Sanz Rebbe also knew that there isn't such a custom. Already, yes, okay.

Law 13: Table, Jewelry, and Groom — Remembrance of the Destruction

The Rambam's Words: "And likewise they decreed, that one who sets a table to make a feast for guests — one lacks from it a bit, and leaves an empty place without a dish from the dishes that are fitting to place there."

The Ramban says further, and so they practiced, one who sets a table to make a feast for guests, someone prepares a great feast, a great table, to make a great feast, so one makes it very nice, but it shouldn't be complete. **"One lacks from it a bit, and leaves an empty place without a dish from the dishes that are fitting to place there."** One takes off, one doesn't put all the nice plates, one takes off a bit and leaves an empty place. The empty place is to remember.

Jewelry

The same thing, **"when a woman makes her jewelry of silver and gold,"** one doesn't put on all the jewelry. **"She leaves out a type from the types of jewelry that she is accustomed to, so that the jewelry should not be complete,"** it shouldn't be worn with all the jewelry.

Groom — Ashes of Disgrace

And the same thing, **"when the groom marries,"** when a groom has a wedding, **"he takes ashes of disgrace and places them on his head in the place of tefillin,"** he puts a bit of ash. We are not exactly particular about this, one puts a drop before the chuppah, but here it looks like one doesn't have the nice shtreimel, on the head one has some piece of ash.

In Order to Remember Jerusalem

The Rambam says, **"in all these things in order to remember Jerusalem,"** to remember the city of Jerusalem. One doesn't say the destruction of Jerusalem. What does this mean? **"As it is stated, 'If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand forget.'"** If I forget you Jerusalem, there Jews say by the rivers of Babylon, if I have forgotten Jerusalem, I will otherwise forget my right hand, **"let my tongue cleave to my palate if I do not remember you."**

Law 14: Musical Instruments — Decree Not to Play

The Rambam's Words: "And likewise they decreed not to play all musical instruments, and all types of music and all types of song it is forbidden to rejoice with them and to hear them because of the destruction."

The Rambam says further, **"and likewise they decreed not to play all musical instruments,"** that one should not make a full orchestra of all musical instruments. No, that's not what the word states. "All" means "any." So you think. Why is it not like jewelry? There it clearly states that one should lack. With musical instruments, different from that, one should not at all. **"And all types of music and all types of song it is forbidden to rejoice with them and to hear them because of the destruction."**

Song by Mouth Over Wine

Ah, I would have said, one may not all types of music, one must leave over. You can wait. **"Even song by mouth over wine,"** one drinks wine, one should not... when one drinks wine one should not sing, **"as it is stated, 'with song they shall not drink wine.'"**

Custom of Israel: Words of Praise

But on this the Rambam says, **"All of Israel has already adopted the custom to say words of praise or songs of thanksgiving to God and the like over wine."** That means, one is indeed strict that secular songs should not be sung over wine, but when one sings words of praise, one may. But the Rambam says that this is a custom that he agrees with, that one may. The Rambam elaborates on this. This is another thing that no one follows, not just today, but one never followed it. And in the Laws of Chanukah there is some discussion about this.

Songs and Praises with Music

And also, just as the Rambam brings from the Geonim already, that if one does say songs and praises, one can certainly say songs and praises with music. Why should the leniency work specifically on this and not on that? We are weaker. Because in general, the song doesn't say any verses. The mouth can say

verses. Ah, I hear. That which we sing with. If one sings for the sake of devekut (spiritual attachment), I don't know.

Law 15: Crowns of Grooms and Brides

Words of the Rambam: "And afterwards they decreed regarding crowns of grooms in general, that the groom should not place any wreath on his head, as it says 'Remove the turban and take off the crown.'"

The Rambam says further, all of Israel has already adopted... ah, the Rambam says, **"And afterwards they decreed regarding crowns of grooms in general,"** that one should not put on at all... That means, at first they only said that one should place a bit of ash on the head. That means, one can have a crown, one can have a nice shtreimel, or whatever, one used to make some kind of crown. One places a bit of ash. Later they made a greater decree **"that the groom should not place any wreath on his head,"** one should not place any wreath, any crown on the head, **"as it says 'Remove the turban and take off the crown,'"** take off the crown because of the troubles that happened to the Jews.

Crowns of the Bride

"And similarly they decreed regarding crowns of the bride, and a diadem of silver and gold," that one should not put on crowns of silver and gold. **"But of braided material,"** but made of fabric, sewn things, one may.

Law 16: Tearing Upon Seeing the Destruction

Another thing that one doesn't follow properly or at all... A few more laws about Jerusalem, but this doesn't have to do with time but with place, when one arrives in Jerusalem.

Words of the Rambam: "One who sees the cities of Judah in their destruction," he sees the cities of Judah in their destruction, that means specifically in their destruction. A great question, today someone comes to Jerusalem, Jerusalem is baruch Hashem built, one sees thousands of cranes that are building. It's not so simple, you don't know... Certainly one doesn't say this. But perhaps at the place of the Temple. Ah, **"says 'Your holy cities have become a wilderness' and tears. If he sees Jerusalem in its destruction he says 'Our holy and beautiful house... has become a burning of fire' and tears."**

From the Lookout Point

From how far does one see it? **"From the lookout point."** When one arrives at the place called Tzofim (lookout), we've already learned several times in the Laws of Passover for what, it's a place where one can see Jerusalem from there. **"And when he reaches the Temple he tears another tear."** Another one. He doesn't travel through Jerusalem, but he comes from the desert, just as when one travels to the Judean desert one knows that one travels past the old city. **"One who comes from the direction of the desert, tears for the Temple first and afterwards for Jerusalem."** When he sees Jerusalem he does the opposite, he makes two tearings then.

Law 17: Laws of Tearing — How

Words of the Rambam: "All these tearings are done by hand and while standing, and one tears all his garments that are upon him until he reveals his heart. And one never mends these tearings."

How does one tear the tearing? **"All these tearings are done by hand and while standing,"** one does it with the

hands and one does it standing. What does that mean, different from regular mourning? Are there other laws regarding mourning? Yes, one can be very strict. **"And one tears all his garments that are upon him until he reveals his heart."** It's not enough one garment, everything, until he reveals his heart. Does he touch the heart? No, until he reveals his heart, until one sees all the garments up to the heart. **"And one never mends these tearings."** These garments may not be sewn.

Permissions in Sewing

But the prohibitions, what may one do? One may not sew it properly nicely, but there are several types of ways of sewing it in such a temporary way, this one may do. To baste, to gather, to tack, **"to sew like a ladder stitch,"** all these things one may do. And also in Chol HaMoed we had "to sew like a ladder stitch," this is a temporary way of sewing. This is another thing that no one follows. One tears a tearing, but not a tearing that is not mended, and not until he reveals his heart.

Law 19: Nullification of the Fasts in the Days of Mashiach

Also there is further. Oh, oh, oh, now, since the Rambam wrote in his book, not only... No! You say a simple explanation, I'll say a better explanation, a halachic explanation. The Rambam's book is not only for this time, the Rambam's book is also for the days of Mashiach. One must know how to conduct oneself when Mashiach comes. One must also look in this Rambam. So it is accepted.

Words of the Rambam: "All these fasts are destined to be nullified in the days of Mashiach." All these fasts will be nullified in the days of Mashiach. He said when there is peace. The Rambam says now, it's still not peace, because

there is still not the redemption. The Rebbe says that Mashiach. I say, this is not only for whom, this is an end of the entire sugya (topic). There is a sugya that also when there is peace, so all these things that I said is in peace, but there is peace, that means that there is the Mashiach whose work is to bring near, whose work is to bring peace, all these fasts will be nullified.

Days of Joy and Gladness

"And not only that, but they are destined to become holidays, days of joy and gladness." What will become holidays, days of joy and gladness, **"as it says 'Thus says Hashem of hosts, the fast of the fourth and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah for joy and gladness and good festivals.'"** When will this be? **"When there will be truth and peace, love it."** A cause will come, it will be truth and peace.

The Rambam's Explanation in Eight Chapters

The Rambam's commentary on the Mishnah in Eight Chapters explains that this means to say that the Almighty doesn't care whether you fast or whether you don't fast. The Almighty cares that you do truth and peace, which means excellence of character traits. Peace means good character traits, and truth means one knows the truth, and intellectual perfection. As if, this is the perfection of man, and then one can be joyful. May we merit it soon.

The Fast of Esther

What about the Fast of Esther? Also nullified, but he doesn't say it clearly. Perhaps not, because it's just from the rabbis. He knows what the matter of the Fast of Esther is. It's part of that which Purim is not nullified. One will learn the details. Okay, until here.