

1. Nighttime

Herbert Dobrinsky, *A Treasury of Sephardic Laws and Customs: The Ritual Practices of Syrian, Moroccan, Judeo-Spanish, and Spanish and Portuguese Jews of North America – Revised Edition*. Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1988, pp. 306-307

In the synagogue, the services for the eve of Tisha BeAb are held in an almost pitch-dark room. Each individual is given a flashlight as he enters the synagogue (in days gone by, a candle was given to the worshipper) in order to enable him to read the prayers. The synagogue Ark and reading desk are draped in black... the hazzanim wear their black robes without white bibs, so that they look more austere, in keeping with the sadness of the occasion. The hazzanim do not sit at their normal places of honor on the *teba*. Instead, they take a seat at the plain table which is covered with a black cloth and set up in front of the reader's desk...



From rt: Rev. Albert Gabbai, Parnas Leon Levy, and Hazan Charles Garson of KK Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia

It is especially interesting to note that all year long there is no *parokhet* in the synagogue at all, except on Tisha BeAb. This black curtain is put on either to commemorate the fact that the *parokhet* in the Temple was torn or simply to add to the pitch-black atmosphere of sadness which envelops the entire synagogue...

As explained elsewhere, the reason the special *Mah nishtanah* lamentation is recited on Tisha BeAb is because Tisha BeAb falls on the same night of the week as Pesah does in any given year.

7. Daytime (ibid.)

On Tisha BeAb morning, when the Torah is taken out, the wooden bells are used, not the silver ones. These are much more drab in appearance and are more in keeping with the austerity of the day.

The Torah is not read with the *yad* (pointer) which is normally used. In order to make a distinction, there is no *levantar* (raising of the Torah before it is read), and the individuals are not called to the Torah by name. There is a simple, soft announcement of *Kohen, Levi, Yisrael, and maftir*. The *parnas*, who usually stands on the right, stands on the left. The one who is called to the Torah, who would normally come up on the left, comes up on the right. The normal salutations of *Hashem imakhem* and *Yebarekhekha Hashem* are not said when approaching the Torah. Procedures opposite to the normal are adopted in order to show our mourning and how sad and confused we are as we commemorate the destruction of the Temple.