Tisha B’Av in United States

Many Jewish people in the United States observe Tisha B’Av, which is the ninth day of the month of Av in the Jewish calendar. It is a day of mourning to remember various events, such as the destruction of the First Temple and Second Temple in Jerusalem. When Tisha B’Av falls on Shabbat (Saturday), it is deferred to Sunday, 10th of Av.

What do people do?

Many Jewish people in the United States observe various restrictions during Tisha B’Av. These restrictions may include:

- Fasting.
- Avoiding washing, bathing, shaving or wearing cosmetics.
- Not wearing leather shoes.
- Avoiding certain types of work.
- Abstaining from sexual activities.

Many traditional mourning practices are observed, such as refraining from smiling and laughing. Those who observe Tisha B’Av are allowed to study only certain portions of the Torah and Talmud on Tisha B’Av. The book of Lamentations is read and mourning prayers are recited in the synagogue. The ark (cabinet where the Torah is kept) is draped in black.

Some universities or learning centers give those who observe Tisha B’Av the chance to sit exams at other dates, on the provison that certain requirements are met. Some Jewish centers offer a program for observing Tisha B’Av. People who are sick are exempted from fasting on the day.

Tisha B’Av is not a federal public holiday in the United States. However, some Jewish organizations may be closed or have restricted opening hours.

Background

Tisha B’Av, also known as the Jewish Fast of Av, is a period of fasting, lamentation and prayer to remember the destruction of the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem. Jewish people still continued the fast day even after they rebuilt the First Temple after the Babylonians destroyed it in 586 BCE. The Romans destroyed the Second Temple by burning it in 70 CE and this marked the start of a long exile period for Jewish people. These are two of five sad events or calamities that occurred on the ninth day of the month of Av. The other three were when:

- Ten of the 12 scouts sent by Moses to Canaan gave negative reports of the area, leading to the Israelites’ despair.
- The Romans captured the fortress city of Beitar, the last stronghold of the leaders of the Bar Kochba revolt, and thousands of Jewish people, including Bar Kokhba (or Kochba), were massacred in 135 CE.
- The city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 136 CE.

Tisha B’Av is a sad day that observes other major disasters and tragedies that Jewish people experienced throughout history, including the expulsion of the Jewish people from England in 1290 and from Spain in 1492, as well as the mass deportation of Jewish people from the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II.

Tisha B’Av begins at sunset on the previous day and lasts for more than 24 hours. It is the culmination of a three-week period of mourning. Weddings and other parties are generally not permitted and people refrain from cutting their hair during this period. It is customary to refrain from activities, such as eating meat or drinking wine (except on the Shabbat) from the first to the ninth day of Av.
Chinese “Valentine’s Day” or Daughter’s Festival

August 2, 2014 is the Chinese Valentine’s Day in the Year of the Horse. August of 2014 is also the Sheep month in Chinese tradition. The symbol for the Chinese Valentine’s Day this year is a snake. Horse, Sheep and Snake are in the Fire group. Fire symbolizes red, hot, warm and love. Therefore, August 2, 2104 is a good day for dating.

The Story
The story behind this day is about the 7th daughter of Emperor of Heaven and an orphaned cowherd. They were separated by the Emperor. The 7th daughter was forced to move to the star Vega and the cowherd moved to the star Altair. They are allowed to meet only once a year on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month.

The Stars
The star Vega (Weaving Maid) is the 5th brightest star in the sky & is easy to find in the summer sky. Vega is 16 times bigger and 25 times brighter than our Sun. The temperature on its surface is more than 10,000 degrees. It's situated 25 light years away from Earth.

The star Altair (Cowherd) is the 11th brightest star in the sky. Therefore, it’s not difficult to find in the summer night. Altair is 4 times bigger and 11 times brighter than our Sun. The temperature on its surface is about 8,000 degrees. It's 17 light years away from the Earth.

The Festival
On Chinese Valentine’s Day, people in love like to go to the temple of Matchmaker and pray for their love and the possible marriage. Single people will do the same thing to ask for luck of love at the Matchmaker temple.

Chinese Valentine’s Day is also called The Daughter's Festival. Since ancient times Chinese girls practiced good handcrafting skills like the Weaving Maid. The skill was viewed as essential for their future family. On this night, single girls prayed for the Weaving Maid star to let them be more skillful. When Vega was high up in the sky, girls performed a ritual by placing a needle on the water surface. If the needle stayed afloat, this meant the girl was ready to find a husband. They also could make a wish, but only one for the whole year.

In some Chinese provinces people believe that decorating the flowers on the ox’s horn on the Chinese Valentine’s Day enables would prevent them from disaster. On the night of Valentine's Day, women washed their hair to give it a fresh and shiny look. Children washed their faces the next morning with water from their backyards for a beautiful appearance. Girls threw five-color ropes, which were made at the Chinese Dragon Boat festival, on the roof for magpies. Magpies carried ropes to build the bridge.

http://www.chinesefortunecalendar.com/77.htm

Farewell to Another Medical Interpreting Services Pioneer: Rollyne Wong

Rollyne Wong was one of the first staff interpreters at UC Davis Health System. She provided language services to patients, staff and providers for many years in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

Rollyne has been a great resource to the MIS department. She was a groundbreaker in the field of medical interpreting, before any formal training or specialized resources were available to healthcare interpreters.

Over the years, Rollyne served not only as one of the lead interpreters at the Health System, but also as a person that her colleagues could turn to. Her peers often referred to her as the “Mother” of the department because she took care of everyone and never forgot a single birthday.

On June 26th, Medical Interpreting Services hosted a farewell lunch for Rollyne, who retired after 26 years of service. It was a wonderful event, many staff from various clinics and department came to share their good wishes. Rollyne’s retirement plans include travel, volunteer charity work, writing, and taking care of her two sons. Wishing you a fun and fulfilling retirement, Rollyne! We will miss you!