

BeHa"B vs. Pesach Sheini

By Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

As detailed at length in a popular multi-part series earlier this year, titled "5785: The Rarest Year of the All," 5785 is not only a rare year, but calendarically speaking, actually the hands-down rarest of them all. You see, 5785 is classified as a HaSh"A year in our calendars. This abbreviation is referring to Rosh Hashana falling out on Thursday (hei), both months of Cheshvan and Kislev being shalem (shin - 30 day months instead of possibly 29; these are the only months that can switch off in our set calendar),[1] and Pesach falling out on Sunday (aleph).

As noted, a HaSh"A year is the rarest of years, and out of the 14 possibilities in Tur's 247-year calendar cycle,[2] this year type occurs on average only once in about 30.19 years (approximately 3.3 percent of the time).[3] Indeed, at times there are 71 years (!) in between HaSh"A years. The last time this year type occurred was 31 years ago in 5754 / 1994. The next time will be 20 years hence in 5805 / 2044. The next several times after that are slated to be 27 years further, in 5832 / 2071 and then a 51 year gap until 5883 / 2122.

The reasons and rules governing the whys and whens this transpires are too complicated for this discussion; suffice to say that when the Mishnah Berurah discusses these issues he writes "ain kan makom l'ha'arich," that this is not the place to expound in detail,[4] which is certainly good enough for this author.

Obviously, such a rare calendar year will contain many rare occurrences. Although the series has so far delineated many fascinating phenomena, this article focuses on what is perhaps the most significant one of the year. And so, after considerable research into their ramifications, we now continue our halachic trek through this remarkable year...

As discussed in previous articles in this series, this year hosted a rare and joyous Yerushalayim Purim Meshulashas well as the complicated Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos. Although these are rare phenomena that always occurs in a HaSh"A year, they can also occur in other year combinations as well.[5] In fact, over the entire twentieth century they occurred eleven times, or eleven percent of the time. This was the fifth occurrence in the twenty-first century.

BeHa"B or Pesach Sheini?

What happens when there is a rare convergence of PesachSheini and BeHa"B? You see, during this exceptional year, 5785, the third and final day of the Chodesh Iyar BeHa"B falls out on PesachSheini (this week), as it does any year that contains a Purim Meshulash and Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos. But before we can address this question, a bit of background is in order.

What is BeHa"B ?

We are actually currently in a semi-annual period that many do not even realize exists: a series of "Days of Tefillah" colloquially known as BeHa"B. This acronym stands for Monday (Beis - 2nd day of the week), Thursday (Hei - 5th day of the week), and the following Monday (Beis). These days are

commonly observed on the first Monday, Thursday, and Monday following the earliest Rosh Chodesh after Pesach (Rosh Chodesh Iyar), and likewise after Sukkos (Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan).[6]

The custom of utilizing these specific days for prayer and supplication is already mentioned almost 900 years ago by the Baalei Tosafos, its importance reiterated by the Tur, and unbeknownst to many, actually codified in halacha by the Shulchan Aruch as a proper minhag.[7]

Whose Minhag Is It, Anyway?

Although both the Tur and Rema refer to BeHa”B as a German-French custom, and the Shulchan Gavoa (cited lemaaseh by the Kaf Hachaim) writes that this was not the minhag in Sefarad, implying that Sefardim are not beholden to keep BeHa”B,[8] nevertheless, it must be noted that the Shulchan Aruch himself must have felt strongly about this minhag of BeHa”B, as aside for spending a whole (albeit brief) siman on it – Orach Chaim 492, he also refers to it and its importance in at least two other locations – Orach Chaim 429:2 and 566:2-4. However, in the latter citing he does refer to fasting b’tzibbur for BeHa”B as an “Ashkenazic minhag.”

Later Sefardic authorities as well, including the Knesses Hagedolah, Pri Chodosh and Chida (ad loc.) also discuss its importance. Therefore, this author finds it interesting that the general Sefardic minhag is not to recite BeHa”B. In fact, there does not seem to be any Sefardic tradition of specific liturgical tefillos for BeHa”B and the Siman referring to BeHa”B - Orach Chaim 492, is noticeably absent from the Yalkut Yosef Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, implying that it is not relevant to the average Sefardi. Indeed, in Rav Yaakov Hillel’s Ahavat Shalom Luach it simply states: “U’Bizmaneinu Bnei Sfard lo nahagu l’hisanos – nowadays, the Sefardic minhag is not to observe BeHa”B.”[9]

And it is not just the general Sefardi populace who do not recite BeHa”B. Already in his time, the Taz noted that even among Ashkenazic communities BeHa”B observance was not widespread. More recently, Rav Menashe Klein, in a side point to the issue being addressed in a teshuva, maintains that one who does not observe BeHa”B is not considered “Poresh Min HaTzibbur” (separating himself from the general community), as even nowadays its observance is not prevalent.[10] But, among many Yeshiva communities, and especially in Eretz Yisrael, reciting BeHa”B twice annually is de rigueur.

Why Now?

The reason most commonly mentioned by the Poskim[11] why these days of prayer are following the holidays of Pesach and Sukkos, is that over the extended holidays, when there is a mitzvah of feasting and simcha, it is more likely that people may have stumbled in some area due to improper behavior and inadvertent sin, and BeHa”B is meant to help rectify any possible offense. This idea is based on Iyov (Ch. 1:5) who would bring Korbanos after “Yemei Mishteh”, or “Days of Feasting”. These sins might be due to a variety of probable offenses including: mingling - at a festive meal or even at a Drasha in the Shul (!), Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed related transgressions, Chillul Hashem, or overabundance of merriment and gastronomical pleasures.[12]

Other explanations offered to explain why BeHa”B was established include:

To entreat Hashem to strengthen our bodies especially at the time of changing seasons when many are likely to get ill.[13]

To beseech Hashem that we should have abundant harvests after Pesach and plentiful rains after Sukkos.[14]

To commemorate Queen Esther's original 3-day fast (which actually was Pesach time, and not Purim time).[15] This is pushed off until the first opportunity after Chodesh Nissan. [The Taanis Esther that we fast before Purim is not really due to Esther's actual fast as recorded in the Megillah, but rather to commemorate that when the Jews went to war against the anti-Semites of their day, they fasted].

Yet, interestingly, although BeHa"B is traditionally meant to be a fast day, still, very few actually do fast, as in our generations people are considered weaker. Instead, most make do with Selichos (and perhaps Divrei Mussar), with the majority also reciting Avinu Malkeinu. This rationale is found in many sefarim, including the Chavos Yair, Aruch Hashulchan, Mishnah Berurah, and Kaf Hachaim, who, quoting the Elyah Rabba, cites this as the Minhag of Prague.[16] As an aside, if not actually fasting, one should replace the word 'Taanis' in the Selichos with 'Tefillah' instead.[17]

Monday, Thursday, Prayer Days...

Monday and Thursday are considered especially potent days for prayer, as Moshe Rabbeinu climbed Har Sinai to receive the Torah on a Thursday and returned with it on a Monday.[18] A mnemonic to showcase this is the first pasuk read on a public fast day Haftara, "Dirshu Hashem B'H imatzo" - "Seek out Hashem when He is to be found." [19] The letters Beis and Hei show that an auspicious time when Hashem may be found is on Monday and Thursday; [20] therefore Mondays and Thursdays are preferable for fasting and prayer. For whichever reason BeHa"B was established, we certainly shouldn't let this golden opportunity for tefillah pass us by.[21]

Pesach Sheini

The 14th of Iyar is commonly dubbed "Pesach Sheini." [22] Pesach Sheini commemorates the day when those who were unable to bring the annual Korban Pesach (special Pesach sacrifice - Pascal lamb) at its proper time (Erev Pesach), were given a second chance to offer this unique Korban.[23]

Although technically not considered a true holiday, and despite the fact that it is (astonishingly!)[24] not listed in the traditional halachic sources as one of the days that Tachanun is not recited, nevertheless, the custom for many is specifically not to recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini, in order to 'tap into' the merit that this particular day had during the times of the Beis HaMikdash.[25] Although the Pri Megadim [26] maintains that Tachanun should be recited on Pesach Sheini - as the original day it is commemorating was only meant for individuals in unique circumstances, and its absence of mention in the traditional halachic sources as one of the days that Tachanun is not recited speaks volumes, nevertheless, most authorities rule that one should not say Tachanun on this day.[27]

On the other hand, it is known that the Chazon Ish and Steipler Gaon did recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini. Other Gedolim who are quoted as reciting Tachanun on Pesach Sheini include the Chasam Sofer and later the Brisker Rav. This is also the basic 'Minhag Ashkenaz,' and Pesach Sheini is not listed as one of the days of not reciting Tachanun in most Germanic sources.[28]

There is an interesting common custom associated with Pesach Sheini - eating Matzah.[29] Another interesting fact about Pesach Sheini is that it is commonly considered the Yahrtzeit of Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis,[30] and many visit his kever in Teveria on that day.

Pesach Sheiniv. BeHa"B

But what happens when there is a rare convergence of Pesach Sheini and BeHa"B? You see, during this exceptional year, 5785, the third and final day of the Chodesh Iyar BeHa"B falls out on Pesach Sheini, as it does any year that contains a Purim Meshulash and Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos.

So our question essentially is - what does KlalYisrael do? Which holiday do we observe? The joyous Pesach Sheini or the official fast of BeHa"B?

As with many inyanim in halacha or minhag, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. This debate seems to be based on Megillas Taanis, which states (see Chullin 129b) that Pesach Sheini is a day in which one may not eulogize (indicating it is a full-fledged holiday), and hence strongly implying that certainly one may not fast on it.

Yet, others counter that Megillas Taanis is no longer considered authoritative or binding (see Rosh Hashana 18b-19b; which concludes that Megillas Taanis was essentially void with the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, except for the Rabbinic holidays of Chanuka and Purim), and Pesach Sheini, as it is essentially a make-up holiday for those who were unable to offer the Korban Pesach on Erev Pesach, cannot be considered any more stringent than Erev Pesach itself. And Erev Pesach is known for its Taanis Bechorim, Fast of the Firstborn. So perhaps fasting is not only permitted on Pesach Sheini, but actually mandated when it coincides with BeHa"B. So what do we do?

Although several Poskim maintain to fast only until Chatzos on that day as a sort of compromise solution, or hold not to fast at all and rather push BeHa"B observance off until the next day (Tuesday) or several days later to the coming Thursday or the next Monday,[31] it is feasible that this is only regarding actual fasting - which the vast majority does not currently do anyway.

The Chazon Ish, who generally holds of no special inyanim for Pesach Sheini, held that one may fast as usual. And in fact, in Orchos Rabbeinu it cites that this is what he and his brother-in-law, the Steipler Gaon, did when Pesach Sheini and BeHa"B coincided – they recited Selichos and Tachanun as usual. The Brisker Rav did so as well. This is also the common minhag among Germanic ("Yekkish") communities.[32]

No Contradiction

Interestingly, there is little mention of this issue in any early source, so it seems that there truly is no real discrepancy. As pointed out by Rav Sroya Debilitzky zt"l, Sefardim generally did not recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini, whereas Ashkenazim did, until the 'not saying' minhag crept out and spread to Ashkenazic circles, via Minhag Eretz Yisrael, as the original Ashkenazic communities in Eretz Yisrael adopted several Sefardic minhagim over the years.

On the other hand, as mentioned previously, only Ashkenazim classically observed BeHa”B fasting and prayers. Hence, in the classic sense, “ne’er the twain” actually met, as whenever a convergence occurred, Sefardim would observe the ‘no Tachanun’ of Pesach Sheini, whereas Ashkenazim would keep the Selichos of BeHa”B.[33]

Yet, nowadays, when most of the world (Ashkenazim as well) does not recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini anyway, the minhag of many is to synthesize the two: recite a somewhat abbreviated version of BeHa”B Selichos – utilizing precedent from other times when Selichos and ‘no Tachanun’ coincide, for example when a Bris occurs on a fast day (as per Orach Chaim 131:5), while also skipping Tachanun. This is probably the most common minhag in shuls where BeHa”B is normally recited. Indeed, this ‘synthesis psak’ is brought down lemaaseh in both Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin’s authoritative Ezras Torah Luach, as well as the Belz Dvar Yom B’Yomo Luach.[34]

The psak to still recite Selichos (and perhaps fast when applicable) when Pesach Sheini and BeHa”B coincide, was taught by many Poskim - including Rav Yaakov Emden, the Chasam Sofer, the Maharam Ash, the Maharsham, and the Eishel Avraham (Butchatch), as the proper minhag. The Maharsham adds that the Rema M’Fano wrote that normally one should not fast on Pesach Sheini – unless it coincides with BeHa”B, as then “muttar Itzibbur lehisanos bo.”[35]

Practically - Pesach Sheini

On the other hand, on a practical note, as most shuls in the world (unfortunately) do not “do BeHa”B” nowadays, this debate is essentially a moot point, and Pesach Sheini would trump. As Rav Yisroel Reisman wryly remarked in his introduction to the book “Tachanun,” non-Jews cannot possibly comprehend the simchah and elation (and perhaps sigh of relief) felt when the gabbai klops on the bimah and the tzibbur skips Tachanun (especially “Long Tachanun”).

There actually is strong basis for this hanhagah in our case, as Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, and Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer ruled to skip a whole day of BeHa”B for Pesach Sheini, following the main old Yerushalmi minhag, as per the Tukachinsky Luach, the Aderes, and Rav Yisrael Nissan Kuperstock - as apparently this is indeed ‘Old Minhag Yerushalayim,’ that Pesach Sheini entirely trumps and displaces the third and last BeHa”B when they coincide.[36]

This minhag first seems to be cited in Rav Shalom Schwadron’s Hagahos on his grandfather (and namesake)’s Shu”t Maharsham. The Maharsham actually maintained that one should fast when Pesach Sheini and BeHa”B coincide, arguing on Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson’s Yad Shaul V’Yosef Daas- who held not to fast. Rav Schwadron added that Minhag Yerushalayim, as he was informed by Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop that the Gedolim of Yerushalayim already dealt with this issue, as was cited in the Pinkas (ledger) of Rav Shmuel Salant’s Beis Din in the Churva Shul in 5663/1903 (a year when Pesach Sheini and BeHa”B coincided), to specifically not fast or recite Selichos on that day.[37]

This would also certainly hold true according to the opinion of the Cheshek Shlomo, who writes that it is prohibited to fast on Pesach Sheini, as it is a chag listed in Megillas Taanis, which he asserts was not one of those that was discontinued, as Pesach Sheini is not a holiday that was established due

to miracles.[38] A similar assessment was given by the Shaarei Deah, and as mentioned previously, Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson.[39]

BeHa”H?

Yet, there are those who nowadays argue that the obscure source that Rav Schwadron was quoting was recently printed, and it actually stated that Pesach Sheini only trumps that specific day, but BeHa”B observance should nonetheless still be kept – by pushing it off to that upcoming Thursday, creating a rare BeHa”H (Monday, Thursday, Thursday).

This is also the conclusion of the Maharsham, that although he is of the opinion that Selichos should be recited, on the other hand, if one follows an alternate minhag and skips BeHa”B observance on that day, he should nonetheless make-it up on the following Thursday or Monday. On a more contemporary note, Rav Sroya Debilitzky concludes similarly as well.[40] Hence, it seems that the true Old Yerushalmi Minhag is not as is commonly cited, but should rather be to push off the last BeHa”B to Thursday.

There is a recent small sefer titled “Pischa Zeira,” which discusses various subtopics related to Pesach Sheini, who devotes a full chapter to this topic and debate. He posits that there may be a differentiation between a Bris and Pesach Sheini when coinciding with BeHa”B. Regarding a Bris on a Taanis, it is still a day that is meant for fasting, hence Selichos are still recited, just not Tachanun in that specific location, due to the simcha of the Bris. This is opposed to Pesach Sheini, which many maintain that as it is a minor holiday and mentioned in the Torah, simply cannot be overruled as a day intended for fasting.[41]

Come what may, we see there is no clear-cut contemporary consensus to the observance of this rare convergence, and each Kehillah should and I’m certain will, follow their own minhag.[42] But in this author’s mind, it is quite fascinating that this remarkable coincidence will occur in our exceptional year.

Our fascinating journey detailing the many remarkable facets of our rare year will in”H be continued...

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch famously wrote that “the Jew’s catechism is his calendar.”[43] It is this author’s wish that by showcasing the uniqueness of our calendar year and its rare minhagim, this article will help raise appreciation of them and our fascinating calendarical customs.

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[1] According to R' Yosef Yehuda Weber, author of Understanding the Jewish Calendar, Cheshvan and Kislev both having 30 days can only happen when the year has either 355 days or 385 days, which occurs pretty often - 44.93119 percent of the time.

[2] Tur (Orach Chaim 428). Although many over the years have raised concerns with the Tur's Luach [see, for example, Pri Chodosh and Levush (Orach Chaim 428), Kovetz Teshuvos Chasam Sofer (vol. 6:35), and Biur Halacha (427:1 s.v. k'sherosh)] as we know that it did not always prove entirely correct; in fact, a total of 29 years out of 946 years [5055 to 6000] were / are not accurate, coming out to 3.0655% inaccuracy, nonetheless, overall, it is still for the most part, on target, and many use it, on some level, at least as a frame of reference. [Parenthetically, I believe most people would not complain too much about receiving a 97% on a test.]

[3] As noted by R' Yosef Yehuda Weber, HaSh"A years occur only 8 times in the Tur's entire 247 year cycle - a mere 3.23877 percent of the time. In fact, between the year 4119 (the year that the calendar was established) and year 6000, it will have occurred only 62 times - 3.29437 percent!

[4] Biur Halacha (428:1, end s.v. eilu hayamim). He also writes a tad earlier that "v'hinei kol zeh shekasavnu ain tzarich leha'arich b'frotrot aich hu kein, rak sheteida haklal," (loosely) that all of these matters do not need to be measured in their exact minutiae, but rather one should know the general rules. On a similar note, R' Yosef Yehuda Weber (in communication with this author) added 'it is kedai to point out that for Rosh Hashana to be on Thursday in a regular year (not a leap year) Molad Tishrei will be between 3 am and 204 chalakim on Tuesday and 11 am and 1079 chalakim on Thursday. If Molad Tishrei is between 3 am and 204 chalakim on Tuesday and 3 am and 203 chalakim on Thursday the year will be "Hei Chof Zayin" (Cheshvan will have 29 days, Kislev will have 30 days) it will be the most common of year types. If Molad Tishrei is between 3 am and 204 chalakim on Thursday and 11 am and 1079 chalakim on Thursday the year will be 'Hei Shin Alef' (this coming year), the rarest of all year types. In 5785 Molad Tishrei is at Thursday 3 am and 391 chalakim (3 A.M., 21 minutes and 13 chalakim). This means that if the Molad would have been 188 chalakim (a mere 10 minutes and 8 chalakim) earlier, 5785, our rarest of years, would have been the commonest of years!'

[5] Purim Meshulash and Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos also occur in a 'ZaCH"A' year (4.33 %), as well as in a 'HaCh"A' year (3.87%), both of them pretty rare as well. So altogether they only occur around 11.5% of the time. Before this year, they last occurred four years ago - back in 5781/2021, and prior to that, thirteen years earlier, in 5768/2008, three years previous, in 5765/2005, and four years before that, in 5761/2001, and only next expected in another twenty years, in 5805/2045, and followed three years later in 5808/2048.

[6] Although this is the prevalent custom [see Shulchan Aruch and Rema (O.C. 492:1), Darchei Moshe (O.C. 429:4), Magen Avraham (O.C. 492:3), Taz (ad loc. 1), Shach (Y.D. 220: end 31), and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 3)], on the other hand, there are several communities of Germanic origin (as well as Oberlanders) who follow the minhag of the Mahari Weil (Shu"t, Dinin V'Halachos 14; cited by the Taz ibid.), and Maharil (Hilchos Shabbos Bereishis 2) that the BeHa"B after Sukkos should be held at the end of Marcheshvan (the last Monday, Thursday, and Monday of the month) only starting after the 17th of the month, instead of at the beginning, as the Mishnah (Taanis 10a) states that 17 Marcheshvan is the starting point for potential BeHa"B fasting during a dearth of rainfall. See the Wurzburger Rav's Likutei Halevi (pg. 42 and footnote 155 ad loc.) as well as Minhagei Yeshurun (Ch. 16, pg. 29). However, the other poskim (cited above) point out and assert that rain-related fasting should not be dependent upon nor related to the established BeHa"B fasting for post Pesach and Sukkos.

[7] Tosafos (Kedushin 81a s.v. sakva), Tur and Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 492:1). Actually, a BeHa"B of sorts is mentioned even further back, in Maseches Sofrim (Ch. 21:1-3), but that seems to be for one specific reason: to commemorate Mordechai and Esther's three-day fast. There is an interesting machlokes Rishonim between the Rosh (Taanis Ch. 1:20) and Mordechai (Taanis 629) whether BeHa"B is considered a Taanis Yachid or Taanis Tzibbur.

[8] Shulchan Gavoah (O.C. 492:1, cited in Kaf Hachaim 492:8). This is additionally mentioned in the Sefer HaTodaah (vol. 1, pg. 157) and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch of Rav Rafael Baruch Toledano (vol. 4:330).

[9] Ahavat Shalom Luach (5776, pg. 163 s.v. Taanis Sheini Kamma).

[10] Taz (O.C. 566: 3), Shu"t Mishnah Halachos (vol. 3:15, s.v. u'lefi aniyus daati). See also Shu"t Igros Moshe (O.C. vol. 1:106) for an interesting discussion why the Tefillah "Mevorchin BeHa"B" is still recited the Shabbos prior to BeHa"B even when a chosson is present.

[11] See Rosh (Taanis Ch. 1:20), Mordechai (Taanis 629), Tur (O.C. 492), Rema (ad loc.), Magen Avraham (ad loc. 1), Shulchan Aruch Harav (ad loc. 1), Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 1) and Shaarei Efraim (Ch. 10:46).

[12] Mingling at a festive meal or even at a Drasha in the Shul is cited by Rashi and Tosafos (Kiddushin 81a s.v. sakva); Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed related transgressions by the Elyah Rabba (O.C. 492:3; citing the Maaglei Tzedek); Chilul Hashem by the Tur (O.C. 429:2); overabundance of merriment by the Maharil (Dinei Hayamim Bein Pesach L'Shavuot); and gastronomical pleasures by the Kol Bo.

[13] See Levush (O.C. 492:1).

[14] See Raavyah (Taanis 863), Mordechai (Taanis 629), Shach (Y.D. 220:31 s.v. v'nirah li), and Sefer HaTodaah (vol. 1, pg. 156).

[15] Maseches Sofrim (Ch. 21:1-3). See also Sefer Minhagei Yisrael (vol. 1, Ch. 26) who opines that according to this reasoning, the reason for the BeHa"B after Sukkos is not for the same reason as the BeHa"B after Pesach. The Taanis Esther that we fast before Purim is not really due to Esther's actual fast as recorded in the Megillah, but rather to commemorate that when the Jews went to war against the anti-Semites of their day, they fasted [see Mishnah Berurah (686:2); quoting the Rambam (Hilchos Taaniyos Ch. 5:5)].

[16] Shu"t Chavos Yair (126), Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 492:2), Mishnah Berurah (566:6), Kaf Hachaim (O.C. 566:37; citing the Elyah Rabba, quoting the minhag in Prague), Shu"t Mishnah Halachos (vol. 9:174), and Nitei Gavriel (Pesach vol. 3, pg. 242). In a similar vein, see also Shu"t Noda B'Yehuda (Kamma O.C. 35, s.v. hinei), Shulchan Aruch Harav (Iggeres HaTeshuva Ch. 3; based on the Yerushalmi Nedarim Ch. 8:1), and Orchos Rabbeinu (vol. 2, pg. 160, Hilchos Taanis 2).

[17] See Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin's Ezras Torah Luach (5776; pg. 57 and 106), who adds that since the vast majority of people are not actually fasting, one should replace the word 'Taanis' in the Selichos with 'Tefillah' instead. This is in accordance with the ruling of the Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 581:4) who advises doing the same regarding Selichos in Elul, that it is imperative not to say 'shekarim' in these Tefillos. The Ba'er Heitiv (O.C. 492:3) and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 5) imply similarly. The Belz D'var Yom B'Yomo Luach (5776, Iyar, Be"HaB) adds that the Minhag of the Belzer Rebbes is to at least not serve meat on these days.

[18] See Midrash Tanchuma (Parashas Vayera 16), Tosafos (Bava Kamma 82b s.v. k'dai shelo), and Mishnah Berurah (134:6).

[19] Yeshaya (Ch. 55:6).

[20] Matteh Moshe (748). See also Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 580:3, based on Tosefta (Taanis Ch. 2:5) and Tur, Shulchan Aruch and Rema (O.C. 134:1) that Mondays and Thursdays are preferable for fasting and prayer. There is even a minhag of fasting every Monday and Thursday for the "Churban HaBayis, on the Torah that was burnt, and for Chilul Hashem." See also Kaf Hachaim (O.C. 580:32), who concludes this topic stating that the ikar is that there should be Torah along with Teshuvah, and to be "laasok tamid b'Toras Chaim."

[21] The Shaarei Teshuva (492:1) cites the Raavad (Tamim Dayim 177) who maintains that "Yechidim and Anshei Maaseh" should keep a BeHa"B after Shavuos as well; yet concludes that the prevailing custom is not to. See also Raavyah (Taanis 863), Mordechai (Taanis 629), Beis Yosef (end O.C. 429), Levush (ad loc. 1), Chok Yaakov (492:1), Magen Avraham (ad loc. 1), Shulchan Aruch Harav (O.C. 492:1), Pri Megadim (E.A. ad loc. 1), Chida (Birkei Yosef ad loc. 1), Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 1) and Mishnah Berurah (ad loc. 1), who all rule that there is no BeHa"B after Shavuos. Apparently, Zeman Mattan Toraseinu affords less opportunity for nichshal.

[22] See Sefer HaTodaah (vol. 2, pg. 253) who explains that it is referred to as 'Pesach Sheini' as it is the Pesach that falls out in the second month of the year - Iyar. In the Mishnah and Gemara (ex. Rosh Hashana 18a) it is referred to as "Pesach Kattan" or "Pischa Ze'ira" (the Small Pesach). It is listed in Megillas Taanis (Ch. 2; also cited in Gemara Chullin 129b) that it is a day that hespedim are forbidden (a minor holiday).

[23] Bamidbar (Parashas Behaalosecha Ch. 9:1-15). See Rashi (ad loc. verse 10) and Sefer Hachinuch (Mitzva 380).

[24] The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 131:12) writes that he is astounded that Pesach Sheini is not listed by any of the traditional Halachic sources - [including the Gemara, Rambam, Tur, Shulchan Aruch, or even the Mishnah Berurah] as one of the days that Tachanun is not said. However, see Shu"t Mor V'Ohalos (Mahadura Kama 39, Ohel Brachos V'Hoda'os, pg. 37 s.v. od) who asserts that there was no reason to list Pesach Sheini as a day with no Tachanun recited, as it is mentioned explicitly in the Torah (meaning it is obvious that there is no Tachanun). Conversely, see Shu"t Mimaayanei Yeshua (3) who posits (and explains at length) that this machlokes (between the Pri Chodosh and Pri Megadim et al.; see next footnote at length) is based on whether or not a "Chag L'Yechidim" would be enough to exempt the tzibbur from Tachanun. He also discusses the differences between Pesach Sheini and Shavuot in regard to reciting Tachanun the week after. See also the Chida's Moreh B'Eitzba (Ch. 8:222) who states that on Pesach Sheini one should be "Yarbeh simcha ketzas, ki kadosh hayom."

[25] Eishel Avraham (O.C. 131, s.v. nohagin).

[26] Pri Megadim (O.C. 131, M.Z. s.v. mah).

[27] These Poskim include the Tikkun Yissachar (pg. 32a; referring to Pesach Sheini as somewhat of a 'Moed'), the Knesses Hagedolah (O.C. 131, Haghos on Beis Yosef 12, citing 'Minhag Salonika'; however, see Magen Gibborim ad loc. 18 who states that the minhag of Eretz Yisrael, Mitzrayim and Salonika is to recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini), Pri Chodosh (ad loc. 7), Elyah Rabba (ad loc. 14), Yaavetz (in his Siddur Beis Yaakov vol. 2, Shaar Hayesod, Seder Chodesh Iyar pg. 103:21), Pardes Eliezer (Pesach Sheini; citing Rav Chaim Vital quoting the Arizal), Shalmei Tzibur (ad loc. 10), Shaarei Teshuva (ad loc. 19), Beis Dovid (Shu"t 53; cited by the Shaarei Teshuva ibid. and Kaf Hachaim ad loc. 99; who explains that there is no real machlokes regarding minhag Salonika, Mitzrayim and Eretz Yisrael, but rather that all agree that Tachanun is not said on the 14th of Iyar as it is the true Pesach Sheini, and those who maintained that it was recited, were actually referring to the 15th of Iyar), Chida (Machzik Bracha, ad loc. 5), Butchatcher Rav (Eishel Avraham ad loc. s.v. nohagin), Maharsham (Daas Torah ad loc. 7), Shaarei Ephraim (Ch. 10:27), Shulchan HaTahor (ad loc. 8), the Shoel U'Meishiv (Yosef Daas V'Yad Shaul Y.D. 401), Birkas HaPesach (Ch. 16:5), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 12), Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 99), Sefer Ishei Yisrael (Ch. 43:11), Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin's authoritative Ezras Torah Luach (5776, pg. 107; 'yesh nohagin shelo lomar bo Tachanun'), and the Belz D'var Yom B'Yomo Luach (5776, 14th Iyar). This is also the "Minhag Yerushalayim" - see Shla"h (Maseches Yoma, Perek Derech Chaim, Tochachas Mussar 203), the Tukachinsky Luach Eretz Yisrael (Pesach Sheini), Halichos Shlomo (Tefillah, Ch. 11: 9 and Moadim vol. 2, Ch. 11:20), and Halichos Even Yisrael (Moadim vol. 1, pg. 218:1).

[28] It is known that the Chazon Ish and Steipler Gaon did recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini [see sefer Bein Pesach L'Shavuot (in the introduction to the sefer titled 'Hanhagos HaChazon Ish' by Rav Chaim Kanievsky), also found at the end of Sefer Imrei Yosher (25), and cited in Orchos Rabbeinu (vol. 1, pg. 68 and new edition: vol. 2, pg. 115:25) and Moadei HaGra"ch (vol. 1:170, pg. 79)]. Other Gedolim who are quoted as reciting Tachanun on Pesach Sheini include the Chasam Sofer (Minhagim V'Halichos shel Maran HaChasam Sofer (Ch. 11:3) and the Brisker Rav (cited in Shu"t Pe'as Sadecha vol. 1:43). Pesach Sheini is noticeably absent from the days of not reciting Tachanun in classic Ashkenazic sources, including the Maharil and Sefer Minhagim, as well as the Roedelheim and Avodas Yisrael Siddurim and Minhag Amsterdam. Hence, most Kehillos of Germanic origin (Yekkes) do indeed recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini, and certainly the previous Mincha. [Thanks are due to R' Avraham Schijveschuuder for pointing this out, and R' Yisroel Strauss of KAJ in Washington Heights for confirming.] There is a recent small sefer titled 'Pischa Ze'ira' which devotes considerable attention (pp. 32-42 and pg. 90-93) to the debate of whether or not to recite Tachanun on Pesach Sheini, and specifically in Yerushalayim, and the various rationales thereof. See also Shu"t Rivevos Efraim (vol. 1:339 and vol. 258) who explains that Tachanun is recited at the Mincha before Pesach Sheini, even according to the majority opinion that it is not said on Pesach Sheini itself, as opposed to most other Moadim. [Most poskim agree with this as well - see Luach Eretz Yisroel (Chodesh Iyar), Halichos Shlomo (Moadim vol. 2, Ch. 11, Dvar Halacha 29), and Ishei Yisrael (Ch. 25:18). On the other hand, in the annual Ezras Torah Luach it adds in parenthesis that "yeish omrim" not to say Tachanun at the Mincha beforehand as well (thanks are due to my former talmid, R Josh Bennet, for pointing this out). In the recently published Shu"t Gevuros Eliyahu (vol. 1- O.C. 13:12, footnote 113; which is based on Rav Henkin's psakim) the editor, Rav Doniel Osher Kleinman, notes that Rav Henkin's lashon implies that he indeed held this way.] Although not widely followed, there is also an opinion based on the Zohar (Parashas Behaalosecha, Rayuh Mehemna, pg. 152b) that Tachanun should not be recited for a full seven days starting from Pesach Sheini [cited in the Shu"t Mor V'Ohalos (ibid.), quoting Rav Mordechai M'Chernobyl; and in Shu"t Divrei Yatziv (O.C. vol. 1:75, 4 s.v. u'l'zeh), quoting the Divrei Chaim of Sanz. The Pischa Zuta (Birkas HaPesach Ch. 16, footnote 6) cites a different reason as well, quoting the Maharshak in his Imrei Shefer on Parashas Behaalosecha. He adds that the Likutei Mahariach (quoting the sefer HaYashar V'HaTov) was also a proponent of this minhag].

[29] Such a minhag is commonly traced to a comment by Rav Yaakov Emden in his Siddur Beis Yaakov (Seder Chodesh Iyar 21), positing that Pesach Sheini marked the day when the provisions Bnei Yisrael brought out of Mitzrayim were used up, thus marking the continuation of the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim, and of eating Matzah. There is also some debate amongst several Acharonim whether the proper time to fulfill this Matzah Minhag is the day of the 14th of Iyar, as is commonly accepted, or the following evening, the night of the 15th, marking a parallel to the Pesach Seder a month prior. For more on the topic of this minhag, see sefer Zichron Yehuda (pg. 38), Shaar Yissachar (Maamrei Chodesh Iyar, Maamar Pischa Ze'ira 12), Darkei Chaim V'Shalom (Minhagei Yemei Ha'Omer, 631), Lekutei Mahariach (vol. 3, Minhagei Yemei Ha'Omer, Pesach Sheini pg. 44b; also citing the Maharam A"sh), Kli Chemda (Parashas Va'eschanan pg. 26; also citing the Avnei Nezer), Birkas HaPesach (Ch. 16, 5 s.v. yesh and footnote 7), Sefer HaTodaah (vol. 2, pg. 253), Sefer Mataamim (pg. 43), Shu"t Divrei Yisrael (vol. 1: 130; citing precedent from the Ikrei HaDat, O.C. 18: 62, quoting the Pachad Yitzchak that eating Matzah after Pesach is not a violation of 'Bal Tosif'), Shu"t Rivevos Efraim (vol. 2:129, 39 and vol. 3:331), Orchos Rabbeinu (vol. 2, pg. 97, 17),

Nitei Gavriel (Pesach vol. 3, pg. 330), Shu"t Divrei Shalom (vol. 4:87), Shu"t Kinyan Torah B'Halacha (vol. 7: 42, 3), Halichos Even Yisrael (Moadim vol. 1, pg. 218:3, and footnote 2; who questions how anyone can consider it 'Bal Tosif' any more than giving Zeicher L'Machatzis Hashekel on Taanis Esther; however, see sefer Pischa Zeira pg. 187 for a possible distinction between the two), and the Belz D'var Yom B'Yomo Luach (5776, 14th Iyar). See also Moadei HaGra"ch (vol. 1:164-169, pg. 77-79), as well as the maamar in Kovetz Moriah (vol. 397-399, Nissan 5775) written by its author, Rabbi Matisyahu Gabai, who explains why the Steipler Gaon would eat Matzah on Pesach Sheini, while his brother-in-law, the Chazon Ish, would not. It is also known that the Vilna Gaon (see Maaseh Rav 185) would not eat Matzah after Pesach, to show that he only ate Matzah on Pesach exclusively because it was Hashem's command. Whatever minhag one follows, all agree that one may not make a bracha of 'al achilas matzah' on Pesach Sheini, and if one does, he has made a bracha l'vatallah. See Shu"t Divrei Malkiel (vol. 5:104) and Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer (vol. 10: 7).

[30] Although this is widely assumed and cited by many, nevertheless, see Shu"t Yaskil Avdi (vol. 5:54, 1) citing the Sdei Chemed (vol. 1, Asifas Dinim, Maareches Eretz Yisrael pg. 4a) that the reason masses visit Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis's kever on Pesach Sheini is that the Beis Knesses and Beis Midrash built over his kever in Teveria were inaugurated on Pesach Sheini and many were kavua a minhag to celebrate every year on that day at his kever, similar to Rabi Shimon bar Yochai's kever on Lag B'Omer. The Sdei Chemed cites several parallels including celebrating their hidden Torah being revealed to the world ('ohr ha'meir l'olam, u'meir eini chachamim b'halacha'). Additionally, like Rav Shimon, Rav Meir was one of the five new students of Rabi Akiva who received semicha at that time. It is interesting to note that they do not mention Lag B'Omer being the actual Yahrtzeit of Rabi Shimon bar Yochai nor Pesach Sheini the Yahrtzeit of Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis. In fact, the Ben Ish Chai (Year 1, Parashas Vayeishev 28) mentions the minhag to light a candle 'l'ilui nishmas' Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis on Rosh Chodesh Teves, implying that that is his true Yahrtzeit. On an interesting side point, there are some who posit [see Rav Reuvein Margolius's 'Lechaker Shemos V'Kinuyim B'Talmud' (pg. 25:30, Erech R' Meir Baal HaNeis) at length] that Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis is not actually the Tanna Rabi Meir, as we do not find that he was called that name in the Gemara, and it was not until somewhat recently when it was assumed that they are one and the same. In fact, there are two different graves found in Eretz Yisrael, one listed as Rabi Meir (in Teveria; actually two - in separate buildings near each other) and another as Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis (in Gush Chalav; which many claim is the kever of Rav Meir Shatz - Baal Ha'Akdamus – although according to the legend he was niftar on the opposite side of the Sambatyon River). Rav Margolius further (and fascinatingly) opines that the famous Tzedaka in the name of Rabi Meir Baal HaNeis is actually based on an erroneous assumption of seeing the "Kupas Ramba"n" established by the great Rishon, the Ramban, when he moved to Eretz Yisrael following his victory in public debate with the apostate Jew-turned-Franciscan-monk Pablo Christiani. In fact, the Ramban himself wrote (see Toldos Ramban Ch. 4:13) that he established a yeshiva and a fund to elicit support for it from Jews in Chutz La'aretz. Accordingly, the initials Ramba"n, actually referring to Ra bbi M oshe B en N achman, were mistakenly attributed to Ra bi M eir Baa l HaN eis.

[31] All of these options and minhagim are cited in the Tukachinsky Luach Eretz Yisrael.

[32] See Sefer Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbos (Ch. 23, footnote 5, pg. 203; He'aras Rav Sroya Debilitzky) and Orchos Rabbeinu (new edition; vol. 2, pg. 115:25 and 26). The Brisker Rav's

hanhaga is cited in Shu"t Pe'as Sadecha (vol. 2:43). See Rav Binyomin Hamburger's Luach Machon Moreshes Ashkenaz (5785; pg. 69).

[33] Rav Debilitzky's Igresa Chada (5765; pg. 48; cited in sefer Pischa Zeira pg. 143-144). Rav Shmuel Dovid Munk from Haifa offers a similar assessment (Shu"t Pe'as Sadecha ibid.).

[34] See the Ezras Torah Luach (5781 and 5785; Pesach Sheini) which states to recite Selichos and in parenthesis adds "Yeish Omrim Lo Lomar Tachanun," and the Belz Dvar Yom B'Yomo Luach (5785, pg. 609) which states not to say Tachanun as well as to recite the Selichos including "Afafunu Mayim" and "Hashem Hashem," adding to eat Matzah after Chatzos. The Belz Luach further cites the Chida (Moreh B'Eztba; cited previously) that "Yarbeh ketzas b'simcha lichvod hayom, ki kadosh hayom," adding that even so, the Belzer Minhag is not to eat meat on BeHa"B.

[35] Siddur Yaavetz (Shaar HaSiddur, Shaar 3), Sefer Minhagei Chasam Sofer (Ch. 11:5), Shu"t Zichron Yehuda (166), Shu"t Maharsham (vol. 6:32), Daas Torah (O.C. 131:7 and 492:1), Eishel Avraham (O.C. 131:6 s.v. hanohagin) and the Maharsham's hagahos to Orchos Chaim (Spinka; O.C. 492:2; maintaining that the Megillas Taanis anyway only stated not to deliver hespedim on Pesach Sheini, implying that fasting is indeed permitted); also citing the Rema M'Fano's Machberes Hakodesh (Kavannas HaSefirah).

[36] The Tukachinsky Luach Eretz Yisrael (5785; Pesach Sheini) and in his Sefer Eretz Yisrael (Ch. 18:1) citing "Haskamas Rabbanei Yerushalayim", Halichos Shlomo (Moadim vol. 2, Ch. 11:20), Halichos Even Yisrael (Moadim vol. 1, pg. 219:5), Chiddushei Ha'Aderes (Geffen Aderes 3:1, pg. 183; originally published in Kovetz Yagdil Torah, Odessa 5641, Kuntress 8:111), and Shu"t Ani Ben Pachma (29 s.v. od; maintaining that if merely reciting a hesped on Pesach Sheini is assur, then certainly fasting is as well; he concludes to push the last day of BeHa"B off until the next Monday). The Minchas Yitzchak (Shu"t vol. 2:52, 3) implies this way as well, ruling not to do a Hakamas Matzeiva on Pesach Sheini, based on shittah of those who hold BeHa"B gets trumped by Pesach Sheini. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv's opinion that "Minhag Eretz Yisrael" is not to observe BeHa"B when it coincides with Pesach Sheini was related by his grandson, Rav Aryeh Zilberstein of Givat Zev. Rav Tukachinsky adds that those who normally fast on BeHa"B would either not fast at all, or only fast until Chatzos, or fast the following day instead.

[37] Hagahos on Shu"t Maharsham (vol. 6:32) and Daas Torah (O.C. 131:7; also reprinted in the Teshuvos at the end of vol. 5 – 239, pg. 280-281); Yad Shaul V'Yosef Daas (Y.D. 401:7 s.v. shuv).

[38] Cheshek Shlomo (in a letter printed in Sdei Chemed vol. 9, Divrei Chachamim 57).

[39] Shu"t Shaarei Deah (Tinyana-Shaarei Yehuda 16; maintaining that although Megillas Taanis may have been battel, nonetheless according to the Raavad it was not completely abolished, and certainly it would be prohibited lechatchilla to declare a fast on one of the holidays listed within) and Yad Shaul V'Yosef Daas (ibid.). On the topic of whether or not we may establish a fast etc. on one of the festive days mentioned in Megillas Taanis, and what the tzedadim are regarding whether or not a hesped prohibition would include fasting as well, see Rav Rafael Shapiro, Rosh Yeshivas Volozhin's Toras Rafael (99) at length.

[40] See Luach Hahalachos U'Minhagim (5781; pg. 231, footnote 34), citing that this ruling is a 'pele' (astonishing) as the Pinkas Beis Din shel HaGra"Sh Salant ShebeChurvas Rav Yehuda Hachassid, was recently printed in 5774, and on page 359 (Shnas 5663) it states "nidchesa haTaanis Hasheini ad hayom hei – To"v (17)Iyar," and not that it was pushed off entirely; Shu"t Maharsham and Daas Torah (ibid.). Rav Sroya Debilitsky's conclusion is cited in the Ittim L'vinah Luach.

[41] Pischa Ze'ira ('Cheilek Dalet – Sheini Basra M'Taaniyis BeHa"B Shechal B'Pesach Sheini'; pp. 143-160).

[42] Indeed, there are several sefarim, including Likutei Mahriach (vol. 3, Chodesh Iyar pg. 149), Taamei Haminhagim (pg. 250; he'arah to Siman 598), and more contemporarily, Ishei Yisrael (Ch. 43:7 and footnote 27, pg. 504) and Piskei Teshuvos (492:1), that simply cite both sides to this debate, with no clear-cut conclusion.

[43] Cited in the forward to Dr. Arthur Spier's monumental "The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar" (Third, revised edition, 1986).

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda.