

Tikun Hatzot - The Actual Text

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 Tuesday, 04 September 2007
 Last Updated Thursday, 06 September 2007

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Part 1: Tikun Rachel

Tikun Hatzot is divided into two parts: 1) Tikun Rachel which appears in Hebrew below and 2) Tikun Leah [Note Though print button on above right displays dark blue background, it prints fine]

Sages of the Kabbalah have emphasized the supreme value in reciting Tikun Hatzot, known as the Midnight Lamentation, when a Jew rises in the night to express anguish over the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and the exile of the Shechinah. at the same time that HaKodesh Baruch Hu (the Holy One, Blessed Be He) mourns its destruction in His nocturnal Heavenly Court.

It is written in the Talmud: "Rav Yitzhak the son of Shmuel said in the name of Rav, There are three watches in the night, and on each watch HaKodesh Baruch Hu roars like a lion and cries out: 'Woe to the children whose transgressions brought about the destruction of My house, causing Me to burn My holy sanctuary and to exile them among the nations'" (Berachot 3A).

Selected laws:

If a person rises in the night in the month of Elul and only has time to say Selichot or to recite Tikun Hatzot, he should recite Tikun Hatzot.

Someone who awakens from a regular sleep (as opposed to a nap) at midnight or afterward to recite Tikun Hatzot should wash his hands like in the morning and recite the morning blessings and the blessings over the Torah before reciting the Tikun and learning Torah. When reciting the first half of Tikun Hatzot called Tikun Rachel, it is proper to spread a cloth on floor and sit barefooted near the entranceway to the house by the mezuzah to show one's participation in the sorrow of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) which has been expelled from its house. It is also praiseworthy to place ashes on one's forehead as a sign of mourning over the Temple's destruction and to wear sackcloth over one's flesh. An old, sick, or weak person can recite the Tikun while sitting in a chair.

Tikun Leah, the second half of Tikun Hatzot, is recited in a chair, wearing shoes, etc.

The proper time for Tikun Hatzot is from the middle of the night (not 12:00 AM, but rather half-way between sundown and sunrise) until dawn, which is approx. 90 minutes before sunrise. Midnight is the ideal time. Genrally both Tikun Rachel and Tikun Leah are said together. However,

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On Shabbat, Yom Tov, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Chol HaMoed Pesach, Tikun Hatzot is not recited at all.

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Only Tikun Leah is recited on the following occasions: the Ten Days of T'shuva, Chol HaMoed Sukkot, the entire Shemittah year in the Land of Israel, the days of the Omer until Shavuot, the night of Rosh Chodesh, any night that Tachanun is not said the following day because of a holiday.

