



ט' אב תשפ"ד August 12-13, 2024



הלכה • Halakhah

According to the Mishnah (Ta'anit 4:6), Tisha B'Av is the date the **בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ** (Beit HaMikdash, Holy Temple) in Yerushalayim was destroyed about 2,500 years ago, and then again about 2,000 years ago. It was a special place where people from all over the world, Jewish or not, could go to worship and feel close to God. Because of our sadness about not having this place anymore, we have some practices to help us feel and appreciate what we lost. This is called **אַבְלוּת** (aveilut, mourning).

DO

1. Sitting on the floor

It's a sign of mourning to sit on the floor, not a chair. We do this in the evening and morning of Tisha B'Av. But if you have trouble sitting on the floor, you don't have to (Bah Orah Hayyim 559:1).

2. Reading Eikhah

This book of Tanakh is one of the five megillot, and it's about the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. We read it publicly in a sad melody. Most communities read Eikhah at night when Tisha B'Av begins.

3. Saying Kinnot

These are sad poems about the destruction of the first and second Beit HaMikdash and also other tragedies in Jewish history including the Crusades, the expulsion from Spain, and the Holocaust. There are kinnot for Tisha B'Av night and kinnot for Tisha B'Av morning.



DON'T

1. No eating or drinking

Adults fast the whole day, from the night before. Kids can participate by not eating their favorite foods or treats (Mishnah Berurah 550:5).

2. No bathing and washing

The Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayyim 554:7) says we should not wash any part of our bodies on Tisha B'Av. We are allowed to wash off dirt or germs, though (Shulhan Arukh 554:9).

3. No leather shoes

The Mishnah (Taanit 1:4) says we shouldn't wear shoes on fast days. The Shulhan Arukh (554:16) says not to wear shoes with any leather in them. Part of the reason is to make ourselves uncomfortable, so if you're able to wear non-leather shoes that are also a little less comfortable than what you normally wear, that's preferred (Mishnah Berurah 614:5).

4. No greeting each other

There's a custom not to say "Hi," (or "good evening," or any other kind of greeting) to other people. But, if someone who doesn't know this rule greets you, you can respond. It's important not to hurt another person's feelings, but it's also important to still show that it's a sad day by not being overly excited.

5. No learning Torah

A general rule on Tisha B'Av is that we try to avoid doing things that make us happy—and what is happier than learning Torah?! The only parts of Torah we're allowed to learn on this day are those with topics related to Tisha B'Av, like Eikhah or the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash (Mishneh Torah, Taaniyot 5:10), or this special edition of Devash.



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

The book of Eikhah describes how heartbreaking and terrible the חֲרָבָן (hurban, destruction) of the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (Beit HaMikdash, Holy Temple) was for the Jewish people. **But what was it like for God?**

This midrash imagines what the destruction felt like from God's perspective:



Eikhah Rabbah

When God tried to destroy the Beit HaMikdash, God said, "As long as I am in it, the nations of the world cannot touch it. So I will shut My eyes from it and promise that I will not need it until the end of time, and then the enemies can come and destroy it."

איכה רבה פתיחות כד

בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁבָקַשׁ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהַחֲרִיב אֶת בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אָמַר כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאֲנִי בְּתוֹכוֹ אֵין אוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם נוֹגְעִין בוֹ, אֲלֵא אֶכְבֵּישׁ אֶת עֵינַי מִמֶּנּוּ, וְאֶשְׁבַּע שֶׁלֹא אֶזְקֶק לוֹ עַד עַתָּה קָץ, וְיָבוֹאוּ הָאוֹיְבִים וְיַחֲרִיבוּ אוֹתוֹ.

In order to let the nations destroy the Beit HaMikdash, God needed to abandon it. The real end of the Beit HaMikdash, then, was not when it was destroyed, but when God left it.

- ♦ What does this tell us about God and God's relationship to the Beit HaMikdash? What about our relationship to God and our relationship to the Beit HaMikdash?
- ♦ The focus here is on God leaving the Beit HaMikdash, but God never wants to leave the Jewish people. What does this say about God's relationship to us?

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה הָיָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בּוֹכָה וְאוֹמֵר אוֹי לִי מָה עָשִׂיתִי הַשְׁרִיתִי שְׂכִינָתִי לְמַטָּה בְּשִׁבְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַכְשָׁיו שֶׁחָטְאוּ חֲזָרָתִי לְמִקְוָמִי הִרְאֵשׁוֹן....

At that moment, God cried and said, "Oy! What did I do? My Shekhinah (presence) used to dwell below because of Israel, but now that they sinned I returned to My original place...."

- ♦ Why is God crying? What does this tell us about the way God feels about the hurban?
- ♦ Why is it important for God's Shekhinah to be down below in this world? What is Benei Yisrael's role in allowing that to happen?
- ♦ What is missing if God's Shekhinah returns to its original place outside of this world? What can Benei Yisrael do to bring the Shekhinah back? [CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>](#)

3

At that moment, Metatron (one of God's chief angels) came and fell on his face. He said before God, "Master of the World! I will cry so You don't have to cry!"

God said to Metatron, "If you don't let Me cry now, I will enter a place that you do not have permission to enter, and I will cry there."

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה בָּא מִטְטְרוֹן וְנָפַל
עַל פָּנָיו, וְאָמַר לִפְנֵי רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל
עוֹלָם אֲנִי אֶבְכֶּה וְאַתָּה לֹא תִבְכֶּה.

אָמַר לוֹ אִם אֵין אַתָּה מְנִיחַ לִי
לִבְבוֹת עֲבָשׁוּ אֶפְנֵס לְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין
לִּי רְשׁוּת לִכְנֵס וְאֶבְכֶּה.

- ♦ Angels often do things for God, like delivering messages or performing miracles. What's surprising about Metatron offering to cry for God? Why do you think God tells him no?
- ♦ Have you ever needed to go to a place where nobody could see you so that you could cry? What would God be feeling if God had to do that?

4

God said to the angels, "Come, let us go—Me and you—and let us see what the enemies have done to My house."

Immediately, God and the angels went, with Yirmiyahu in front. When God saw the Beit HaMikdash, God said, "Certainly this is My house and this is My resting place where enemies have come and done whatever they wanted!"

At that moment, God was crying, saying, "Oy for My house! My children, where are you? My kohanim (priests), where are you? My loved ones, where are you? What can I do for you?! I warned you, but you did not do teshuvah."

אָמַר לָהֶן הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
לְמַלְאָכָי הַשָּׁרֵת בּוֹאוּ וְנִלְךָ אֲנִי
וְאַתֶּם וְנִרְאֶה בְּבֵיתִי מָה עָשׂוּ אוֹיְבֵים
בּוֹ.

מִיָּד הָלַךְ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּמַלְאָכָי
הַשָּׁרֵת וִירְמְיָה לִפְנָיו, וְכִיּוֹן שָׁרְאָה
הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ,
אָמַר בְּוַדַּאי זֶהוּ בֵּיתִי וְזֶהוּ מְנוּחָתִי
שֶׁבָאוּ אוֹיְבֵים וַעֲשׂוּ בוֹ כְּרִצּוֹנָם.

בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה הָיָה הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
בּוֹכֶה וְאָמַר אוֹי לִי עַל בֵּיתִי, בְּנֵי הַיֶּכֶן
אַתֶּם, כְּהֲנֵי הַיֶּכֶן אַתֶּם, אוֹהֲבֵי הַיֶּכֶן
אַתֶּם, מָה אַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַתְּרִיתִי בָכֶם
וְלֹא חֲזַרְתֶּם בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה.

- ♦ Why do you think God wants to see what happened to the Beit HaMikdash? Why do you think God brings the angels along?
- ♦ What's your reaction to hearing God describe the Jewish people as God's children and loved ones? What's your reaction to hearing about God suffering this way?
- ♦ Did God have a choice about destroying the Beit HaMikdash? Did the Jewish people?

