

ט' באב חשפ"ב August 7, 2022



הלכה • Halakhah

According to the Mishnah (Ta'anit 4:6), Tisha B'Av is the date the Beit Ha-Mikdash was destroyed about 2,500 years ago, and then again about 2,000 years ago. It was a very holy 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 a place like this anymore, we have some practices to help us feel and appreciate what we lost (also called mourning). Here are some of the things we do to mourn:



1. Fasting. Adults don't eat or drink the whole day, from the night before. Kids can participate by not eating their favorite foods or treats (Mishnah Berurah 550:5).



3. Leather shoes. The Mishnah (Ta'anit 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.



2. 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).



4. 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 says, "Hi," to 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. (Mishneh Torah, Ta'anit 5:11).



5. Sitting on the floor. Another sign of mourning is to sit on the floor, not a chair. A lot of communities do this in the evening and morning tefillot of Tisha B'Av. But if you have any trouble sitting on the floor, there is no mitzvah to do so (Bah Orah Hayyim 559:1).

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



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Tehillim 79:1

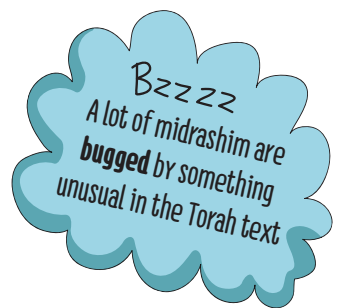
A song of Asaf.
O God, the nations have entered Your space,
made Your holy Temple impure,
and turned Jerusalem into ruins.

תהלים עט:א

מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף
אֱלֹקִים בָּאוּ גוֹיִם בְּנִחְלָתָהּ
טָמְאוּ אֶת־הַיְכָל קִדְּשְׁךָ
שָׂמוּ אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְעֵיִים:

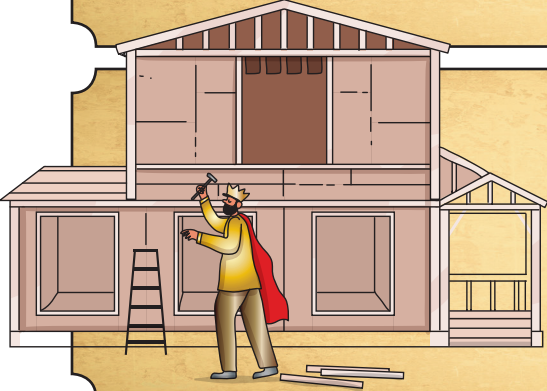
We don't know exactly who Asaf was, but there are 12 chapters of Tehillim associated with him, including this one. Asaf might have been the poet who wrote these chapters, or a singer in the Beit Ha-Mikdash who performed them. (Asaf might not even be a name at all – but this midrash assumes it is!)

This chapter of Tehillim is a painful and intense description of the destruction of the Beit Ha-Mikdash. So, why is it introduced as a מִזְמוֹר (mizmor), a term that usually suggests a joyful song? What was Asaf thinking? Why would he want to sing about this kind of destruction?



Eikhah Rabbah

The pasuk should have called this a "cry" of Asaf, or a "wail" of Asaf, or a "mourning song" of Asaf! Why does it say, "A song of Asaf"?



This can be compared to a king who built a new home for his son. The king plastered, cemented, and decorated it; but his son ended up on an evil path.

לֹא הָיָה קָרָא צְרִיף לְמִימַר אֶלָּא
בְּכִי לְאַסָּף, נָהִי לְאַסָּף, קִינָה
לְאַסָּף! וְמָה אוֹמֵר מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף?

אֶלָּא מָשַׁל לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה בֵּית חֲפָה
לְבָנוֹ וְסִידָהּ וְכִיָּרָה וְצִיָּרָה, וְיִצָּא
בָּנוֹ לְתַרְבוּת רָעָה.

The king went to the house he had built and tore the curtains and broke the rods. But the son's caregiver took a piece of broken rod and used it as a flute and played music on it.

People said to the caregiver, "The king has messed up the home he built for his son, and you are sitting there playing a tune?!"

He replied, "I play because the king destroyed the house, but did not pour out his anger on his son."

So they said to Asaf, "The Holy Blessed One has caused the Temple and Sanctuary to be destroyed, and you sit singing a song?!"

Asaf replied, "I sing a song because the Holy Blessed One poured out anger on wood and stone, and not on Israel."



מִיָּד עָלָה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְחֲפָה
וְקָרַע אֶת הַוִּילָאוֹת וְשָׁבַר
אֶת הַקִּנִּים. וְנָטַל פֶּדָגוֹג שְׁלוֹ
אִיבּוֹב שֶׁל קִנִּים וְהָיָה מִזְמוֹר.

אָמְרוּ לוֹ: הַמֶּלֶךְ הִפָּךְ חֲפָתוֹ
שֶׁל בָּנוֹ וְאֵת יוֹשֵׁב וּמִזְמוֹר!?

אָמַר לָהֶם: מִזְמוֹר אֲנִי שֶׁהִפָּךְ
חֲפָתוֹ שֶׁל בָּנוֹ וְלֹא שִׁפָּךְ חֲמָתוֹ
עַל בָּנוֹ.

כֵּן אָמְרוּ לְאַסָּף: הַקֹּדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ
הוּא הִחְרִיב הַיֵּכָל וּמִקְדָּשׁ
וְאַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב וּמִזְמוֹר!?

אָמַר לָהֶם: מִזְמוֹר אֲנִי שֶׁשִּׁפָּךְ
הַקֹּדֶשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא חֲמָתוֹ עַל
הָעַצִּים וְעַל הָאֲבָנִים וְלֹא
שִׁפָּךְ חֲמָתוֹ עַל יִשְ�רָאֵל.



- ◆ In this midrash, what do the caregiver and Asaf have in common?
- ◆ According to this midrash, why does God destroy the Beit Ha-Mikdash? Is it possible for there to be love and kindness even in acts of punishment?
- ◆ Is it always possible to stay optimistic? Can you think of times that it was hard for you to be positive or hopeful? What could have helped you?



טעמי הפקדא • Torah Trop

When you hear the Book of Eikhah on Tisha B'Av, you'll notice right away that the notes you've learned about in Devash sound different than usual. They are sung in an extra sad tune, which expresses the mood of the book and the mood of the day.

There's also a custom on Shabbat Hazon, the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av, to chant part of the haftarah with Eikhah trop. This is just for the pesukim that talk about the destruction of the Beit Ha-Mikdash. If you listen carefully in shul, you might notice the tune switching back and forth.

Here's a pasuk from Eikhah that starts with some of the more fancy note combinations we've learned, and then also includes some of the more common note combinations.

איכה א:יב

לֹא אֵלֵיכֶם כִּלְעִבְרִי דֶּרֶךְ הַבֵּיטוּ וּרְאוּ אִם־יֵשׁ מִכָּאוֹב
כְּמִכָּאֲבִי אֲשֶׁר עוֹלָל לִי אֲשֶׁר הוֹגָה ה' בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:

Eikhah 1:12

May this never happen to you, who pass along the road—
Look about and see:
Is there any pain like mine, which was dealt out to me
When God afflicted me, on God's day of anger?



Before or
after Shabbat,
scan these codes
to hear these
pesukim.

At the very end of Eikhah, there's a custom for the whole community to chant one line together. It's like a prayer for a return to God.

איכה ה:כא

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Eikhah 5:21

Take us back to You, God, and we will return;
Renew our days, like they used to be!

