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CENTER FOR JEWISH LEARNING

A TISHA B'AV LEARNING

The Mishnah, the foundational canon of Jewish oral tradition, enumerates five tragedies that befell our ancestors on the Seventeenth of Tammuz and on Tisha B'Av.

Mishnah *Ta'anit* 4:6

משנה מסכת תענית פרק ד

חמשה דברים ארעו את אבותינו בשבעה עשר בתמוז וחמשה בתשעה באב. בשבעה עשר בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות, ובטל התמיד, והבקעה העיר, ושרף אפסטמוס את התורה, והעמיד צלם בהיכל. בתשעה באב נגזר על אבותינו שלא יכנסו לארץ, וחרב הבית בראשונה ובשניה, ונלכדה ביתר, ונחרשה העיר. משנכנס אב, ממעטין בשמחה:

Five things happened to our ancestors on the 17th of Tammuz and five on the 9th of Av. On the 17th of Tammuz the tablets [containing the Ten Commandments] were broken; the daily sacrifice was discontinued; the walls of Jerusalem were breached; Apustamus, a Greek officer, burned a Torah scroll; and an idol was erected in the sanctuary of the Temple. On the Ninth of Av it was decreed that the generation of the desert would not enter the Land of Israel; the first temple was destroyed; the second temple was destroyed; Betar, the last Jewish stronghold after the destruction of Jerusalem, was conquered; and Jerusalem was plowed under. When the month of Av enters we become less joyful.

YOUR MISHNAH NAVIGATOR

1. Can you think of any connections between the five events that occurred on each day?
2. Is there an overall theme that can be derived from the events that occurred on the 17th of Tammuz? On the Ninth of Av?

A WORD

Tradition further teaches that other tragedies throughout history occurred to the Jews on Tisha B'Av. Some examples include the beginning of the First Crusade in 1095; the expulsion of Jews from Spain by King Ferdinand in 1492, and the beginning of WWI in 1914. Additionally, Tisha B'Av has been adopted as a national day of mourning for all tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people. In addition to describing the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and the exile of the Jews, there are *kinot* (liturgical poems recited on Tisha B'Av) that mourn the 10 Rabbinic martyrs that were killed by the Romans (this event is also commemorated in the Yom Kippur liturgy), the Crusades, and the Holocaust.

Why is there a need for a national day of mourning for all tragedies that have befallen us? Why or why not is Tisha B'Av, the day on which the Temple was destroyed and the Diaspora of the Jews begun, an appropriate day to commemorate all national tragedies?