

Sources for Tisha B'Av 5768

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Source 1: Mishna Ta'anit 4:6

חמישה דברים אירעו את אבותינו בתשעה באב... נגזר על אבותינו שלא ייכנסו לארץ, וחרב הבית בראשונה, ובשנייה, ונלכדה ביתר, ונחרשה העיר.

"Five calamities befell our ancestors on the Ninth of Av... It was decreed upon our ancestors that they should not enter the Land of Israel; the First Temple was destroyed; so too the Second; The city of Beitar was seized; and the City of Jerusalem was ploughed over."

Source 2: Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 30

ותשא כל העדה ויתנו את קולם ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא אמר רבה אמר ר' יוחנן אותו היום ערב תשעה באב היה אמר להם הקב"ה אתם בכיתם בכיה של חנם ואני קובע לכם בכיה לדורות

"And the entire congregation lifted up their voice, and cried aloud, and the people wept that night."
[Numb. 24:1]

Said Rabba in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: "That night was the eve preceding the ninth of Av, and the Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'You have cried on this night in vain, and I shall ordain it that your generations shall lament on this day forever.'"

Source 3: Midrash Rabbah, Eychah, Petichta 33

ר' אבין ור' יוחנן
אמרי יום שביטל החפר מן מתי מדבר, אי"ר יסיף ר' אבין ור' יוחנן אמרי יום

שביטל החפר מן מתי מדבר, אי"ר לוי כל ערב תשעה באב היה משה מוציא
כרוז בכל המחנה ואומר צאו לחפור והיו יוצאין וחופרין קברות וישנין בהן
לשחרית היה מוציא כרוז ואומר קומו והפרישו המתים מן החיים והיו עומדים
ומוצאין עצמן חמשה עשר אלף בפרוטרוט, חסרו שש מאות
אלף, ובשנת הארבעים האחרון עשו כן ומצאו עצמן שלמים. אמרו: דומה
שטעינו בחשבון; וכן בעשור ובאחד עשר ובשנים עשר ושלשה עשר וארבע
עשר, כיון דאיתמלא סיהרא אמרו דומה שהקב"ה ביטל
אותה גזירה מעלינו וחזרו ועשאוהו יום טוב

Rabbi Abin and Rabbi Yochanan taught:

The Fifteenth of Av is the day on which the grave digging of the dead of the desert ceased.

Rabbi Levi taught:

On the eve of the Ninth of Av, Moses would announce throughout the camp:

Go dig!

The people of Israel would go and dig their graves and sleep inside them.

When morning came, Moses announced:

Let those who live separate themselves from the dead.

The live ones would rise, separate themselves from the dead, and count – and each year 15,000 would die. On the 40th year since leaving Egypt they did the same thing. But in the morning – none had died.

Perhaps we had miscalculated the date? They thought, and slept in their graves again the following night, on the Tenth of Av, and so again on the Eleventh, and on the Twelfth, and on the Thirteenth, and on the Fourteenth –

When the moon became full on the Fifteenth, they declared:

The Holy One, Blessed Be, cancelled the decree. They made this day into a holiday.

Source 4: Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megilla 5b

“Rabbi Judah the President wanted to cancel Tisha B’ Av, but the other rabbis objected.”

Source 5: “Let the Memorial Hill Remember” by Yehuda Amichai

'Let the memorial hill remember'

Let the memorial hill remember instead of me,
that's what it's here for. Let the par in-memory-of remember,
let the street that's-named-for remember,
let the well-known building remember,
let the synagogue that's named after God remember
let the rolling Torah scroll remember, let the prayer
for the memory of the dead remember. Let the flags remember
those multicolored shrouds of history: the bodies they wrapped
have long since turned to dust. Let the dust remember.
Let the dung remember at the gate. Let the afterbirth
remember.

שהר הזכרון יזכור במקומי ,
זה תפקידו. שהגן לזכר יזכור,
שהרחוב על שם יזכור,
שהבנין הידוע יזכור,
שבית התפילה על שם אלוהים יזכור,
שספר התורה המתגלגל יזכור,
שהזכור יזכור. שהדגלים יזכרו,
התכריכים הצבעוניים של ההסטוריה, אשר
הגופים שעטפו הפכו אבק. שהאבק יזכור.
שהאשפה תזכור בשער. שהשליה תזכור.
שחית השדה ועוף השמים יאכלו ויזכרו,
שכלם יזכרו, כדי שאוכל לנוח.

Let the beasts of the field and birds of the heavens eat and remember.
Let all of them remember so that I can rest.

Source 6: Napoleon

The story is told that Napoleon was walking through the streets of Paris one Tisha B'Av. As his entourage passed a synagogue he heard wailing and crying coming from within; he sent an aide to inquire as to what had happened. The aide returned and told Napoleon that the Jews were in mourning over the loss of their Temple. Napoleon was indignant! "How come I wasn't informed? When did this happen? Which Temple?" The aide responded, "They lost their Temple in Jerusalem on this date 1,700 years ago." Napoleon stood in silence and then said, "Certainly a people which has mourned the loss of their Temple for so long will survive to see it rebuilt!"

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Source 7: Seven historical events that happened on Tisha B'Av:

1. During the time of Moses, Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the 12 Spies, and the decree was issued forbidding them from entering the Land of Israel. (1312 BCE)
2. The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar. 100,000 Jews were slaughtered and millions more exiled. (586 BCE)
3. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans, led by Titus. Some two million Jews died, and another one million were exiled. (70 CE)
4. Beitar has fallen – the last city in Judea to survive the Bar Kochva revolt (135CE)
5. The Spanish Inquisition culminated with the expulsion of Jews from Spain on Tisha B'Av in 1492. (The Alhambra Decree, issued March 31, 1492, ordered all Jews to leave Spain by the end of July 1492. July 31, 1492 was Tisha B'Av)
6. On the eve of Tisha B'Av 1942, the mass deportation began of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, en route to Treblinka.
7. Bombing of Jewish Community Center in Argentina (1994 CE)