

THE CHICAGO TORAH NETWORK SHABBAT FAX[©]

A WEEKLY PRESENTATION OF JEWISH THOUGHT PUBLISHED IN MEMORY OF RAE DANIEL

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Hang in there - Shabbos is coming!

TORAH PORTION: DEVARIM (DEUTERONOMY 1:1-3:22)

This week's CTN Shabbat Fax is sponsored by Bruce & Cheryl Leon in honor of Aunt Leona Rosenberg. Happy Birthday and congratulations on receiving an honorary doctorate from Hebrew University.

Next Wednesday Night and Thursday (July 29 – 30) is the Fast of Tisha b'Av

Tisha b'Av: Background

The ninth day of the Jewish month of Av. The saddest day on the Jewish calendar.

According to Jewish tradition, it was destined to be a tragic day. And history has proven that tradition correct.

The destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem took place on *Tisha b'Av*. As did the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290. And from Spain in 1492.

World War I began on *Tisha b'Av*, 1914. And in many ways, it was the event that led to World War II and the Holocaust.

1. Jewish tradition has a lot of celebrations. Shabbat. Passover. Chanukah. Purim.

And the celebrations help keep the Jewish People alive.

But we also have *Tisha b'Av*.

One day. To focus on Jewish suffering. To feel the pain of Jews throughout history.

... *Tisha b'Av* is also a day to think about what the world could look like.

If we were able to live up to our mission. And truly be a "light unto the nations".

Here's what a great Rabbi wrote as a *Tisha b'Av* message in the middle of the nineteenth century.

"Think about the telegraph. Are the messages it delivers mostly about peace and joy?

Or the goods that the locomotive carries. Do they spread well-being and peace?

And science. The great triumph of the human mind. Has it discovered the formula for happiness?" (Rabbi S.R. Hirsch)

... And that was a hundred and fifty years ago.

Today? It's everything from nuclear power to space shuttles. Silicon chips to the Internet. And much more.

... So much has changed. But the questions are the same: *Has man achieved happiness?*

Is there universal peace? And the end of suffering?

Tisha b'Av is a time to look forward to that.

... *And to commit ourselves to make it happen.*

2. It is customary to break a glass at a Jewish wedding, so that even at our times of joy, we don't forget about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. (The Code of Jewish Law.)

The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. It's a sign that the world is not the way it should be.

And the Jewish People can never be comfortable with that.

Because we have a mission:

'*Tikun olam*'. Making the world a better place.

A holier place.

... Breaking the glass is a very powerful message to the bride and groom.

As they think of their future together. And how they can help each other.

They also need to look beyond their own needs.

To look at the imperfect world.

And dedicate themselves to making it better.

REACH OUT TO SOMEONE

Jewish tradition teaches that Jerusalem was destroyed because Jews didn't get along.

... Let's face it. It's not easy. Jews are opinionated. And we're supposed to be.

But we are one People.

And we have to have a special respect for each other. And a special love for each other.

... One of the best things you can do this *Tisha b'Av*? Think of someone who sees things differently than you. Perhaps even very differently.

... And maybe things have not gone that smoothly.

Give them a call. And see what you can do.

You don't have to change your opinion.

... Just try to change your relationship.

TISHA B'AV SERVICES

This Wednesday evening at 8:35pm, CTN will be joining our neighbors at Congregation Shaarei Tzedek (right here at 2832 West Touhy) for *Tisha b'Av* services. It should take about an hour.

We'll do it the way Jews have done it for centuries. Sitting on the floor. The lights dimmed. And reading the 2500-year-old Hebrew Book of Lamentations (translations will be available.)

... We invite you to join us for this powerful and very meaningful way to connect to our heritage and history. If you can, please let us know if you are coming. That way we will be able to take care of you, and help make the experience as meaningful as possible. Call 773.761.0400 x201 or email rabbikatz@torahnetwork.org



Shabbat Shalom and have a wonderful week!

Rabbi Moshe Katz

Rabbi Doni Deutsch

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