

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Devarim
August 10, 2019 *** 9 Av, 5779

Kol Rina – An Independent Minyan, is a traditional egalitarian community. We are haimish (homey/folksy), friendly, participatory, warm and welcoming. We hold weekly services in South Orange as well as holiday services and celebrations which are completely lay led. We welcome all to our services and programs from non-Hebrew readers to Jewish communal and education professionals.

Today's Portions

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Devarim in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2254/jewish/Devarim-in-a-Nutshell.htm

On the first of Shevat (thirty-seven days before his passing), Moses begins his repetition of the Torah to the assembled children of Israel, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their forty-year journey from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, rebuking the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an eternal heritage, into which they shall cross after his death.

Moses recalls his appointment of judges and magistrates to ease his burden of meting out justice to the people and teaching them the word of G-d; the journey from Sinai through the great and fearsome desert; the sending of the spies and the people's subsequent spurning of the Promised Land, so that G-d decreed that the entire generation of the Exodus would die out in the desert. "Also against me," says Moses, "was G-d angry for your sake, saying: You, too, shall not go in there."

Moses also recounts some more recent events: the refusal of the nations of Moab and Ammon to allow the Israelites to pass through their countries; the wars against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og, and the settlement of their lands by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh; and Moses' message to his successor, Joshua, who will take the people into the Land and lead them in the battles for its conquest: "Fear them not, for the L-rd your G-d, He shall fight for you."

Haftarah in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/707608/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftarah is the third of a series of three "haftarot of affliction." These three haftarot are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

Isaiah relays to the Jews a G-dly vision he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against G-d, criticizing them for repeating their errors and not abandoning their sinful ways — even after having been reprimanded and punished. "Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook G-d; they provoked the Holy One of Israel." Harsh words are employed, comparing the Jewish leaders to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. G-d states his distaste for their

sacrifices and offerings which were flavored with pagan customs. "How has she become a harlot, a faithful city; it was once full of justice, in which righteousness would lodge, but now it is a city of murderers..."

Isaiah then speaks gentler words, encouraging the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of justice and kindness towards the needy, orphans and widows, and promising them the best of the land in return for their obedience. "If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow; if they prove to be as red as crimson dye, they shall become as wool." The haftorah concludes with a promise that G-d will eventually reestablish Israel's judges and leaders, when "Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitents through righteousness."

Note: The first word of the haftorah is "Chazon" ("The vision [of Isaiah]"). The Shabbat when this haftorah is read, the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, is thus called "Shabbat Chazon," the "Shabbat of the Vision." According to chassidic tradition, on this Shabbat the soul of every Jew is treated to a "vision" of the third Holy Temple that will be rebuilt with the coming of Moshiach

The Teacher As Hero Devarim 5779 By Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

<http://rabbisacks.org/the-teacher-as-hero-devarim-5779/>

Imagine the following scenario. You are 119 years and 11 months old. The end of your life is in sight. Your hopes have received devastating blows. You have been told by God that you will not enter the land to which you have been leading your people for forty years. You have been repeatedly criticised by the people you have led. Your sister and brother, with whom you shared the burdens of leadership, have predeceased you. And you know that neither of your children, Gershom and Eliezer, will succeed you. Your life seems to be coming to a tragic end, your destination unreached, your aspirations unfulfilled. What do you do?

We can imagine a range of responses. You could sink into sadness, reflecting on the might-have-beens had the past taken a different direction. You could continue to plead with God to change His mind and let you cross the Jordan. You could retreat into memories of the good times: when the people sang a song at the Red Sea, when they gave their assent to the covenant at Sinai, when they built the Tabernacle. These would be the normal human reactions. Moses did none of these things – and what he did instead helped change the course of Jewish history.

For a month Moses convened the people on the far side of the Jordan and addressed them. Those addresses form the substance of the book of Deuteronomy. They are extraordinarily wide-ranging, covering a history of the past, a set of prophecies and warnings about the future, laws, narratives, a song, and a set of blessings. Together they constitute the most comprehensive, profound vision of what it is to be a holy people, dedicated to God, constructing a society that would stand as a role model for humanity in how to combine freedom and order, justice and compassion, individual dignity and collective responsibility. Over and above what Moses said in the last month of his life, though, is what Moses did. He changed careers. He shifted his relationship with the people. No longer Moses the liberator, the lawgiver, the worker of miracles, the intermediary between the Israelites and God, he became the figure known to Jewish memory: Moshe Rabbeinu, "Moses, our teacher." That is how Deuteronomy begins – "Moses began to expound this Law" (Deut. 1:5) – using a verb, *be'er*, that we have not encountered in this sense in the Torah and which appears only one more time towards the end of the book: "And you shall write very clearly [*ba'er hetev*] all the words of this law on these stones" (27:8). He wanted to explain, expound, make clear. He wanted the people to understand that Judaism is not a religion of mysteries intelligible only to the few. It is – as he would say in his very last speech – an "inheritance of the [entire] congregation of Jacob" (33:4).

Moses became, in the last month of his life, the master educator. In these addresses, he does more than tell the people what the law is. He explains to them why the law is. There is nothing arbitrary about it. The law is as it is because of the people's experience of slavery

and persecution in Egypt, which was their tutorial in why we need freedom and law-governed liberty. Time and again he says: You shall do this because you were once slaves in Egypt. They must remember and never forget – two verbs that appear repeatedly in the book – where they came from and what it felt like to be exiled, persecuted, and powerless. In Lin-Manuel Miranda’s musical *Hamilton*, George Washington tells the young, hot-headed Alexander Hamilton: “Dying is easy, young man; living is harder.” In Deuteronomy, Moses keeps telling the Israelites, in effect: Slavery is easy; freedom is harder.

Throughout Deuteronomy, Moses reaches a new level of authority and wisdom. For the first time we hear him speak extensively in his own voice, rather than merely as the transmitter of God’s words to him. His grasp of vision and detail is faultless. He wants the people to understand that the laws God has commanded them are for their good, not just God’s.

All ancient peoples had gods. All ancient peoples had laws. But their laws were not from a god; they were from the king, pharaoh, or ruler – as in the famous law code of Hammurabi. The gods of the ancient world were seen as a source of power, not justice. Laws were man-made rules for the maintenance of social order. The Israelites were different. Their laws were not made by their kings – monarchy in ancient Israel was unique in endowing the king with no legislative powers. Their laws came directly from God Himself, creator of the universe and liberator of His people. Hence Moses’ ringing declaration: “Observe [these laws] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deut. 4:6).

At this defining moment of his life, Moses understood that, though he would not be physically with the people when they entered the Promised Land, he could still be with them intellectually and emotionally if he gave them the teachings to take with them into the future. Moses became the pioneer of perhaps the single greatest contribution of Judaism to the concept of leadership: the idea of the teacher as hero.

Heroes are people who demonstrate courage in the field of battle. What Moses knew was that the most important battles are not military. They are spiritual, moral, cultural. A military victory shifts the pieces on the chessboard of history. A spiritual victory changes lives. A military victory is almost always short-lived. Either the enemy attacks again or a new and more dangerous opponent appears. But spiritual victories can – if their lesson is not forgotten – last forever. Even quite ordinary people, Yiftah, for example (Book of Judges, Chapters 11–12), or Samson (Chapters 13–16), can be military heroes. But those who teach people to see, feel, and act differently, who enlarge the moral horizons of humankind, are rare indeed. Of these, Moses was the greatest.

Not only does he become the teacher in Deuteronomy. In words engraved on Jewish hearts ever since, he tells the entire people that they must become a nation of educators:

Make known to your children and your children’s children, how you once stood before the Lord your God at Horeb. (Deut. 4:9–10)

In the future, when your child asks you, “What is the meaning of the testimonies, decrees, and laws that the Lord our God has commanded you?” tell them, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand....” (Deut. 6:20–21)

Teach [these words] to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deut. 11:19)

Indeed, the last two commands Moses ever gave the Israelites were explicitly educational in nature: to gather the entire people together in the seventh year to hear the Torah being read, to remind them of their covenant with God (Deut. 31:12–13), and, “Write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the people of Israel” (31:19), understood as the command that each person must write for himself a scroll of the law.

In Deuteronomy, a new word enters the biblical vocabulary: the verb *l-m-d*, meaning to learn or teach. The verb does not appear even once in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers. In Deuteronomy it appears seventeen times.

There was nothing like this concern for universal education elsewhere in the ancient world.

Jews became the people whose heroes were teachers, whose citadels were schools, and whose passion was study and the life of the mind.

Moses' end-of-life transformation is one of the most inspiring in all of religious history. In that one act, he liberated his career from tragedy. He became a leader not for his time only but for all time. His body did not accompany his people as they entered the land, but his teachings did. His sons did not succeed him, but his disciples did. He may have felt that he had not changed his people in his lifetime, but in the full perspective of history, he changed them more than any leader has ever changed any people, turning them into the people of the book and the nation who built not ziggurats or pyramids but schools and houses of study.

The poet Shelley famously said, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." [1] In truth, though, it is not poets but teachers who shape society, handing on the legacy of the past to those who build the future. That insight sustained Judaism for longer than any other civilisation, and it began with Moses in the last month of his life. [1] Percy

Bysse Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," in *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, ed. Harold Bloom (Toronto: New American Library, 1996), 448

A Paradoxical Identity by Rabbi Shoshana Cohen

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1102506082947&ca=e539fc7d-f71c-46b0-8025-5f032021bf0a>

Sefer Devarim (the Book of Deuteronomy) is filled with retellings of earlier stories, and Parashat Devarim begins by retelling one of the most famous and important episodes in Sefer Bereishit (the Book of Genesis): Brit Bein HeBetarim, the "Covenant Between the Parts," when God made this famous promise:

(13) Then the Lord said to Avram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be gerim (strangers) in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; (14) but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. . . (16) And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." . . . "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, (19) the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, (20) the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, (21) the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." (Bereishit 16)

In these few verses, we have an abridged version of the beginning of Jewish history, from Avraham through Egypt and into the Land of Israel. When Parashat Devarim nods to this text, we are meant to understand that now is the moment we have been waiting for:

(6) The Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. (7) Resume your journey, and go into the hill country of the Amorites. . . the land of the Canaanites and the Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. (8) See, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land that I swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them." (Devarim 1)

Here the mysterious "iniquity of Amorites" has apparently been resolved, and it is now time for the offspring of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov to claim the land of the Canaanites. One of the key features of our story, as told here, in Bereishit, and elsewhere in the Torah, is that we are on the move. On the one hand, we are told that this is our land, the land of our ancestors. On the other hand, we are told that our forefathers came from elsewhere and that our inhabitation of the land will happen after a long period of time; we will first be slaves, wander in the desert, and only later will we enter and settle. Thus at the core of the Jewish narrative, and therefore Jewish identity, we find a paradox. We are native and conqueror, from here and from there, all at the same time.

Enough of the wandering says Moshe here, you have sat here at Horev too long, it is time to enter and settle the land. And yet our formative experiences as a people, in Aram, in Egypt, and at Sinai, all happened when we were wandering strangers.

What does it mean to live with this paradox of native and conqueror? Our dual identity can allow us to be honest about our own power while keeping it in check. Yes, we Jews, in Israel and in the United States, have a lot of power and a strong sense of belonging, but our other role as former slaves reminds us that this power must be balanced with a strong commitment to justice and looking out for those less powerful. As wanderers, we remember what it was like to be weak and on the outside of society, but part of our survival as a people was an ability to stay true to a textual tradition and narrative that never let us let go of a sense that we were one people bound together.

It is critical that we look deeply at these core elements of what it means to be Jewish. It means leveraging our power and sense of security for the sake of those less secure and it means doubling down on our commitment to our language and textual tradition that has kept us together, creative and thriving throughout our generations.

[Isaiah's Vision by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein, Conservative Yeshiva Faculty](#)

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1102506082947&ca=e539fc7d-f71c-46b0-8025-5f032021bf0a>

This Shabbat is the last of the three Shabbatot which precedes Tisha b'Av. It takes its name - Shabbat Hazon - from its special haftarah which opens with the words "Hazon Yishayahu - The Vision of Isaiah". The "vision" of historical events as seen through the eyes of the prophets is different from how we might see historical events. Yishayahu, characteristically, views the tragic events which befall his city and its people through the prism of the behavior of its inhabitants. Outside threats are seen as a divine response to the internal wrongdoings of the city.

Yishayahu's prophecy is not a response to the Babylonians who destroyed the First Temple. He lived during an earlier threat from the Assyrians who also sought to conquer and destroy Jerusalem. Still, the threats to civil and moral society which afflicted his generation were common to the later generation as well. The city was rife with violence, corruption, and disloyalty to God, all serving as a rationale for the downfall of the city. The prophetic objective was to turn the city away from its evil ways and to restore its worthiness for redemption. Of course, the first step in the process is the realization that something is wrong. This is not always obvious to a society overcome by vice. Prophets had the unenviable task of confronting the society that they lived in and Yishayahu did not spare his tongue in this role: "How has the faithful town become a whore? Filled with justice, where righteousness did lodge, and now - murderers." (1:21) Yishayahu pins the responsibility for this condition clearly on the heads of the leaders of the people: "Your nobles are knaves and companions to thieves. All of them lust for bribes and chase illicit payments. They do not defend the orphan, and the widow's case does not touch them." (1:23)

The nation's problems trickle down; corrupt leadership inspires the populace to do the same. Also, the leadership's self-indulgence leads it to ignore what is going on around them and leaves the nation to fall prey to further depravity. If the leaders will not take responsibility for the nation's problems then the problems will fester until they bring about the nation's downfall.

The Jewish liturgical tradition has us read this haftarah in the days before we mourn the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem as a reminder that the fate of society is in our hands and especially in the hands of the leaders of the people. If the leaders of the nation are unresponsive to society's ills, the nation will fall. If wanton murder is endemic and the leaders fail to curb it for whatever reason there will be a price to pay and the Yishayahu warns us the consequences will be grave.

[Devarim by Rabbi Berel Wein](#)

https://www.rabbiwein.com/blog/post-2212.html?utm_source=Parshat+Devarim+5779+-+Rabbi+Wein&utm_campaign=Weekly+Parsha&utm_medium=email

This final book of the five books of the Torah is the great oration of Moshe at the conclusion of his 40 years of leadership and service to God and the Jewish people. In it he reviews the

events of that period and his observations and comments regarding those events and the behavior of the people of Israel during those decades of miraculous existence in the desert of Sinai.

The underlying question that this book and this week's reading of the Torah raises is why it's necessary for us to hear the entire story once again. There is no doubt that the Torah, being the word of God so to speak, has accurately portrayed the events and details that occurred during this last 40 years of the lifetime of Moshe. So, why the repetition and expansion of the story and why does the Torah include the comments and descriptions of Moshe that at times seem to be in variance to the original narrative as it appears in the previous books of the Torah?

The predators of biblical criticism have always pounced on these seeming discrepancies in order to prove that somehow our holy Torah was produced by committee and various personages over many generations. The survival of the Jewish people, as outlined in this book of the Torah that we have just begun to read, gives factual denial to such theories. It is inconceivable to think that Moshe himself would not be aware of the differences in the text that he himself is presenting as the word of God to the Jewish people. There is a lesson to be learned here as always from every biblical narrative and statement.

We are all aware that reality with strict accuracy is one thing while the perceptions and understanding of those very events is a completely different matter. The Torah describes the events that occurred before the death of Moshe in accurate real detail. These are the events and facts as they occurred and to which Heaven, so to speak, testifies. But the Torah also teaches us that these were the impressions and understanding of those events by human beings – by the greatest of human beings, our teacher Moshe.

The Torah wishes to make clear to us the difficulty of achieving absolute truth and reality in our world. Everything that we see and believe is always refracted through our own life experiences and personal emotions. That is why no one always shares the same opinion regarding issues, personalities or events in our lives. The Talmud teaches us that if there are two witnesses to an event that come to testify in a Jewish court and agree to every detail as to what they saw, we immediately suspect them to being false witnesses and poor jurors. So, the Torah allows us a peek into the soul and mind of Moshe and to reflect on how he saw the events of his lifetime and the story of the 40-year sojourn of the Jewish people in the desert of Sinai. It is always wise to understand the perception of others when we decide on a course of action no matter how convinced we are that we see it correctly and accurately.

[Hope Amid Destruction by Sara J Bloomfield](http://www.jtsa.edu/hope-amid-destruction)

<http://www.jtsa.edu/hope-amid-destruction>

Tishah Be'av, which begins immediately after this Shabbat, is a moment on the Jewish calendar when we pause to reflect on the nature, impact, and significance of destruction. I've spent 33 years working at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, so naturally I've thought intensely about what the catastrophic destruction of European Jewry means for me, for Jews, and for humanity.

Destruction can teach us why freedom, justice, and human dignity are important—and fragile. And, that when freedom and justice are denied and dignity is threatened, we still retain certain powers over our own humanity.

That lesson has been brought home to me over and over again in my career, learning from the responses of both victims and survivors of the Holocaust. The assault on them was so horrific, so devastating, and so complete, it seems as if they had no agency. That, of course, is precisely what the Nazis wanted the Jews to think.

The Jews were faced with very few choices, and those they had have rightly been called "choice-less choices." But choose they did, and those stories from survivors I have known have been a great inspiration to me.

Here's how Lilly Malnik described her first two days in Auschwitz:

"You are told your name is a number. Forget your name. You don't have a name

anymore. And you're hungry. And you have no clothes. And you're freezing. And your family is taken away. At [16] I felt like I was 90. It was very hard for me to accept. Yet I got a hold of myself. I pushed all this behind me and I said: I have to live; I have to be strong."

Vladka Meed was in the Warsaw Ghetto with her mother and younger brother. Although her mother suffered from disease and starvation, every week she managed to save two slices of bread to give to an old man in exchange for bar mitzvah lessons for her son. Of course, this was not to be. Vladka later said, "During the war, my mother taught me what it means to be human."

Gerda Klein spoke about liberation:

"I lost my three best friends. My closest friend Ilse died the week before, Suse died on liberation morning and Liesel . . . a couple of days later. . . . [P]eople think of [a concentration camp] as a snake pit where people stepped on each other. They didn't see there was kindness and friendship and love. And that was the sustaining part."

Norbert Wolheim, told of his shock at seeing a friend in Auschwitz praying. He demanded to know why. His friend said, "I am praising God," to which an angry Norbert retorted, "Are you out of your mind? Praising God here? In this situation where we are isolated? Left alone, in this hell? What are you thanking God for?" His friend responded: "I am thanking God for the fact that he did not make me like the murderers around us."

These survivors remind us that even under the most unthinkable circumstances, the most brutal crimes, and the complete abandonment of the world, individual Jews were able to preserve their dignity, to demonstrate their love, to perform acts of solidarity, and above all to hope.

Another story of hope that inspires me deeply comes from those who did not survive. Immersed in Yiddish culture, historian, social worker, and political activist Emanuel Ringelblum was 39 when the Germans invaded Poland. Imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto, he understood that something of great historical significance was happening to Poland's Jews. Something that would be important to future generations. He organized a clandestine operation to create a record of daily life in the ghetto. To ensure a diversity of perspectives and represent the vibrancy of Jewish life, he involved rabbis, writers, scholars, educators, businessmen, and others in the creation of his "archive." This story is beautifully told in Samuel D. Kassow's magisterial *Who Will Write Our History?*

Ringelblum was clear as to how this would be done—not with pathos and sentimentality but with the standards of rigor and objectivity that all good history demanded. The evidence would be carefully gathered and meticulously analyzed. The truth would be told. Including hard truths—about good Germans and good Poles. Even the hardest truth of all—about bad Jews.

In Ringelblum's mind, the Jews were not a helpless, defeated group of victims, but a people who could retain some degree of control over their humanity, and if not over their physical destiny, they could create a different destiny, by leaving a legacy—a legacy of their own creation. And it would be both a Jewish and universal legacy. He told a colleague:

"I do not see our work as a separate project, as something that includes only Jews, that is only about Jews and that will interest only Jews. My whole being rebels against that. Given the daunting complexity of social processes, where everything is interdependent, it would make no sense to see ourselves in isolation. Jewish suffering and Jewish liberation and redemption are part and parcel of the general calamity and the universal drive to throw off the hated Nazi yoke. We have to regard ourselves as participants in a universal attempt to construct a solid structure of objective documentation that will work for the good of mankind. Let us hope that the bricks and cement of our experience and our understanding will be able to provide a foundation."

Reflecting on periods of destruction in Jewish history should provoke sorrow. Immense sorrow. The losses are incalculable. But the survivors and victims of the Holocaust would

want to challenge us to make sure that our reflection would provoke something much more consequential. That it would also remind us of the power of moral courage and provoke determination, inspiration, and hope. That we—as a people and as individuals—would always write our own history, even that of destruction. In that conviction lies a vibrant future for the Jewish people—and the greatest tribute we can pay to the six million. *(Sara J Bloomfield is the Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)*

Tisha B'av by Rabbi Michael Katz

<https://gem.godaddy.com/p/c0d00f?fact=489438-153161293-11701354334-56b6c9c345b24219e7c0badcc829648628b7b4ed>

Let's do a thought experiment:

Name the three most tragic dates in American History in the 20th century...

Sept. 11, 2001- World Trade Center Attack

Nov. 22, 1963- Assassination of JFK

Dec. 7, 1941- Attack on Pearl Harbor

Question: Will anyone remember those dates, or mourn the events, a hundred years from now?

Think about this:

What was the date of the Boston Massacre (and the beginning of the Revolutionary War?

-March 5, 1770 (249 years ago)

The Johnstown Flood (and the death of 2208 people)? May 31, 1889 (130 years ago)

The Assassination of President William McKinley - Sept 14, 1901 (118 years ago).

The memory of Americans doesn't seem to last more than a generation or two.

Question: When was Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem destroyed?

Answer 9th of Av (Tisha b'Av), 586 bce

Think about this: 2,605 years later, we still remember the date of one of our people's greatest tragedies, and many people still fast and mourn the event. Say this about the Jews-

We never forget.

Question: We now have an independent Jewish State, and Jerusalem is more beautiful and developed than it ever was, so why do we still mourn the destruction of the Temple so many years ago?

Answer #1: We are still in mourning; there is no Temple on the Temple mount where all Jews could go to pray, and there is no peace for Israel, which is still under attack by its enemies. So we mourn the destruction of the Temple because we are still waiting for the coming of the Messiah and our ultimate redemption.

Answer #2: We are not in mourning for an event that happened more than two thousand years ago, and most Jews today are not interested in re-instituting animal sacrifices in a rebuilt Temple (whose very construction next to the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque would trigger a holy war by a billion Muslims against the Jews) We still commemorate Tisha b'Av, because it is a way to remember Jewish history, and to be prepared for anything that the future may hold in store for us. "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." *(Rabbi Michael Katz has been the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Torah in Westbury, N.Y. Since 1979. He also serves on the Conservative Bet Din, the Rabbinic Court supervising conversions on Long Island.)*

Yahrtzeits

Ilisia Kissner remembers her mother Etta M. Strassfeld (Ita bat Hayyim v'Rachel) on Sun. Aug. 11 (Av 10).

Mike Hessdorf remembers his father Ralph Hessdorf on Sun. Aug. 11 (Av 10).