



# There is nothing so whole as a broken heart

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## Goals:

1. Exposure to the history, traditions, and customs of Tisha B'Av.
2. Examining the connection between mourning, destruction and the ability to rebuild.
3. Considering the relevance of Tisha B'Av today at the personal, communal, and national levels.

## Opening (15 minutes)

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- **Clockwise/Popcorn** - How do you understand the saying of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzek "**there is nothing so whole as a broken heart**"? Invite the participants to explain their interpretations through examples from their personal lives – where the broken is actually the whole? Do you agree/oppose this idea? Why?
- **Introducing the activity topic** – The Hebrew calendar positions the theme of memory as a cardinal element and invites us to actively remember the painful places in our collective history as a people. Tisha B'Av is a national day of mourning in which the various catastrophes that have befallen the Jewish people throughout the generations, with an emphasis on the destruction of the Temple. This date brings many questions. We will try to examine together the connection between pain and destruction and the renewed creation. In light of this discussion, we will deal with the question of the relevance of this date today, in our personal, communal and national lives.
- **Watch a short video about Tisha B'Av** (see next page)

- **Suggested guidelines for the viewing process** – Invite participants to write to themselves while watching which sentences caught their attention. Ask them to share in couples the sentences they chose and the reason the ideas stood out to them.



> scan the QR code or click the [link](#).

## Main activity (35 minutes)

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### > Working in small groups - Hevrutot

- Spread the quotes and texts in front of you, on the floor,
- Divide the fellows into groups of four, and ask them to choose a text that evokes some feeling in them – anger/wonder/resistance/joy/identification, etc.
- In the small groups, give the participants the attached questions and invite them to study and analyze the text using the guiding questions.

**Note:** Each group can choose a quote or text.

### > Guiding questions for discussion in hevrotot (15 minutes) -----

Read this quote/text twice.

1. How do you understand the quote/text in front of you? What are the connections to Tisha B'Av?
2. What are the two poles (or inverse emotions and situations) described in the passage? What are the challenges that may arise as a result of the connection between them?
3. Share an example from your time in Israel that illustrates or relates to your understanding of the quote/text.

### > The Six Sections (1/6) -----

“ANYONE WHO MOURNS JERUSALEM  
DESERVES TO SEE ITS REJOICING...”

(Bavli, Ta'anit 30b)

> The Six Sections (3/6) -----

**"Teaching and instruction,  
and precious vessels,  
when I left Egypt  
The voice of joy and gladness,  
and mourning and sorrow shall end,  
when I return to Jerusalem."**

(Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, from: "Aish Tuqad be'qirbi"  
/ A fire shall burn within me)

**"IF I FORGET YOU, O JERUSALEM,  
LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS SKILL!  
LET MY TONGUE STICK TO THE ROOF  
OF MY MOUTH, IF I DO NOT REMEMBER YOU,  
IF I DO NOT SET JERUSALEM ABOVE  
MY HIGHEST JOY!"**

(Psalm 137: 5-6)

> The Six Sections (5/6) -----

**“Walking against the wind,  
the ground is unstable  
trust the rain to keep falling  
May the night last,  
my love do not be afraid,  
It’s always the darkest before dawn”**

(Shalom Hanoach, from: "walking against the wind")

**"Be at ease, now everything  
is fine  
Even the suffocation is  
about to be released  
It's not hell and certainly  
not heaven  
This is the world there is  
and there is no other.**

**Be at ease like you're**

**impeccable  
As if the air gives you  
shelter  
As if the troubles are already  
crystallizing into beauty  
It's as if a rose blooms from  
the dirt."**

(Rachel Shapira,  
from: "Heyi Shketa")

> The Six Sections (6/6) -----

**“Every person needs to  
have an Egypt Land,  
Every person needs to have  
some type of Egypt of their  
own  
to pull themselves out of it  
with a strong hand  
or through clenched teeth.**

**Every person needs terror  
and great darkness,  
and consolation, and a  
promise, and salvation,  
for them to know how to  
lift up their eyes to the  
heavens. Every person needs  
one prayer,  
to be routinely on their lips.  
A person has to be bent  
over just once –  
Every person needs a  
shoulder.**

**Every person needs to have  
some type of Egypt of their  
own,**

**to redeem themselves  
from it, from the house of  
bondage,  
to go out in the middle of  
the night into the desert of  
fear,  
to step straight into the  
waters,  
to see them parting to both  
sides in front of them.  
Every person needs a  
shoulder,  
on which to carry Joseph's  
bones.  
Every person needs to  
stand up straight.**

**Every person needs to have  
some type of Egypt of their  
own.  
And Jerusalem,  
and one long journey  
to remember forever  
through one's feet.”**

(Amnon Ribak)

> **Back to plenary discussion (20 minutes)** -----

- Invite each group to read the passage they have chosen and share a question that challenged them or that they have had an in-depth discussion around.
- Read the following passage with the fellows and then answer the attached questions together (the passage was originally written on the piyyut "Fire will burn within me" but is relevant to all the texts that the participants learned in the previous part of the activity).

"Of course, we can learn from the 'fire burning within me' that our lives as Jews (and perhaps even as human beings) are a life of either-or, or redemption or exile, or black or white, two opposite sides of a coin. But I suggest reading it exactly the opposite, and seeing the marking of the edges as indicating the wide range between redemption and destruction, a range that leads us to recognize that the situation is always in shades of gray. There will be those who think that this gray encourages a grayness grayness of indifference and tolerability, but in my opinion, it is actually binding to action, to the recognition that every act of ours can bring the good closer and remember that there is always a danger that we will fall to the other side... **Most of the days of the Jewish people were not days of complacent tranquility, but neither of annihilation and disaster. Within this space, we function, and within this space, every act carries with it great significance. The Jewish people are a people of transition, of transitions. We live in between, between the historical past that was often painful and between the hopes for the future, between alienation and a sense of home, between a sense of loss and a sense of comfort.**"

(Dalya Marks, from: "In time- journeys in the Jewish- Israeli calendar")

> **Guiding questions for discussion in the plenum (whole gathering)**

1. What is the alternative interpretation that the writer seeks to propose? Why do you think it is necessary?
2. Do you agree with this interpretation? Why?
3. **"Within this space we function, and within this space, every act carries with it great significance. The Jewish people are a people of transition, of transitions. We live in between, between the historical past that was often painful and between the hopes for the future, between alienation and a sense of home, between a sense of loss and a sense of comfort."**

The above quote expresses the element of complexity, the very existence of the gap between aspirations and dreams, and the complex reality.

- How do you think the above passage relates to Tisha B'Av?
- What are the gaps between aspirations and reality or "in-betweens" as the writer calls them,
- which, in your opinion, should most preoccupy us today as a Jewish people?

- How can we begin to narrow these gaps between what is desired and what is found?
- Go back to the sentence with which we opened the activity "There is nothing so whole as a broken heart", has your interpretation of the sentence changed? In what way?

## Concluding part (20 minutes)

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**Required equipment: speaker, newspapers, magazines, photos, paints, glue, scissors, stationery, and three large white poster boards.**

- Divide the group into three small groups - one will focus on the individual level, the other on the community level, and the third on the national level.
- Instruct the participants to create a joint collage through which they can present their vision of how they would have designed the Tisha B'Av date in 2022 (focusing on the level they received – personal/community/national).
- Finally, each group will reveal its collage at the plenum (whole gathering) and briefly tell about the idea and execution.
- **Note to the facilitator of the activity** – allow the participants to create their imagination and encourage them to take it to "their place". It is recommended to put appropriate quiet music while creating. In the end, it is recommended to connect the three poster boards and make a group photo with the collage, which we can return to if we want at another stage of the year.

