



Carnegie Shul Chatter

July 15, 2021



Light candles 8:30pm

Shabbat services 10am

Devarim in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22

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

Why?

When bad things happen, we often ask of God, “Why did you do this to me? Why did you allow this to happen? What did I do to deserve this?”

Sometimes, if we look beyond our grief, the answer is readily apparent, and sometimes we are just not ready to accept the answer, especially if the fault lies with ourselves.

But other times there isn’t an apparent answer. Sometimes there is no good explanation for why God allowed a really, really bad thing to happen.

Sometimes a person is responsible for the bad thing and that person exercised his free will and God did not intervene.

Sometimes the bad thing is an act of nature such as a tornado or an earthquake, and there is no human explanation.

Sometimes, when a bad thing happens to us there is a lesson that we can learn from it, but sometimes there seems to be no lesson to be learned.

But the lesson that is always there is that, no matter how bad things may seem, with faith we will survive. We survived slavery in Egypt. We survived the destruction of the Temples. We survived the Holocaust. We will survive any obstacle that is thrown in our way if we only keep our faith.



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."

Tisha B'Av

This year, Tisha B'Av, the saddest day of the Jewish year, begins at sunset this Saturday evening, with the conclusion of Shabbos, and lasts until sunset on Sunday.

Why is Tisha B'Av such a sad day? Well, you know that Chanukah song Maoz Tzur, that begins, "Who can retell the things that befell us, who can count them?" Well, on Tisha B'Av all sorts of things befell us and here is a recounting of them.



1313 BCE: The scouts returned from the Promised Land with their false reports of giants and other obstacles, causing the Israelites to balk at the prospect of entering the land. As result, G-d decreed that they would wander in the desert for 40 years, until their entire generation had passed away.

In 423 BCE: The First Temple was burned by the Babylonians.

In 70CE: The Second Temple fell to the Romans.

In 133 CE: The Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans ended in defeat. The Jews of Betar were butchered on the 9th of Av and the Temple Mount was plowed one year later on the same date.

Later on in our history, many more tragedies happened on this day, including the 1290 expulsion of England's Jews and the 1492 banishment of all Jews from Spain.

This year, as we approach Tisha B'Av, we find ourselves experiencing a period of some of the

worst anti-Semitism since the fall of Nazi Germany.

But just as the Jewish people have survived the tragedies that befell us in years gone by and have come back to flourish, we can observe Tisha B'Av by reflecting upon the horrors of the past with our everlasting hope that with G-d's help we too will prevail and enjoy a tomorrow filled with peace and prosperity for us and our future generations.

Below is an article written by Rabbi Ron Muroff of Chisuk Emuna Congregation in Harrisburg, published in this week's Chisuk Emuna newsletter, that talks about our ability to bounce back from the disasters that befall us.

“All Who Mourn the Destruction of Jerusalem Will Merit to See it in its Joy.”

- Ta'anit 30b

This Talmudic teaching is confusing; its parallelism is imprecise. Would it not make more sense had the Talmud taught that all who mourn Jerusalem's destruction will merit to see it rebuilt?

Rav Kook explains the Talmud's logic. While all those alive at the time of Jerusalem's rebuilding will see it rebuilt, only those who have mourned Jerusalem's destruction will see its joy.

There is a deep connection between sadness and joy.

Brene Brown writes:

"Have you ever seen the Pixar movie Inside Out? It's about the five main emotions of a 12 year old – Anger, Disgust, Fear, Joy and Sadness. Joy is the main character and dominating emotion, she wants everything to be positive all the time! But as Sadness starts to creep into the picture more and more, Joy learns a valuable lesson – Sadness is actually what deeply bonds us as humans.

"The folks we're closest with in life are often the people with whom we've shared the hardest times. These are the ones who have comforted us when we were sad, or stuck with us through fights. It's generally pretty easy to be around people when we are happy. It takes real courage to support each other through grief and pain. Each time that we allow ourselves to be seen at our lowest points, our trust and connection with those we share that vulnerability with deepens. Our trust in our self deepens, because now you know that you can move through the pain. You know your strength and have been witnessed by those you love."



As we approach Tisha B'Av and mourn the destruction of the temples in ancient Jerusalem and other tragedies in Jewish history, I am also mourning the devastating losses of COVID. Since March 2020, we have experienced so much dislocation, death and suffering. Tisha B'Av's rituals - fasting, sitting on the floor, reading the Book of Lamentations and its heartbreaking portrait of loss - remind us of the value of feeling deeply the pains and struggles of our personal and collective lives. When we get back up on Tisha B'Av afternoon and resume eating after dark, we are reminded that for survivors, destruction is not the end. We are called to live with compassion and gratitude, joy and justice as partners with G-d in repairing the world.

We don't need to do it alone. Indeed, Jewish tradition teaches that we can't do it alone. Visiting the sick and comforting mourners are just two mitzvot that exemplify how in critical moments we are called upon to share our vulnerability. Together, for millennia, Jews have confronted suffering by bearing witness - both seeing and being seen, finding strength and - when possible - moving through the pain.

With the help of G-d and each other, may we continue to do so now and in the future.

*Mark Your
Calendar*

Carnegie Shul Annual Meeting

Sunday, July 25 | 2:30 pm | via Zoom

(Link to be sent out the week of the meeting)