



Tisha B'Av, Shabbat, and... Passover?

When the biblical law with the rabbinic, we favour the biblical. This is why rabbinic fasts (the minor fasts and Tisha B'Av) cannot coincide with Shabbat, whereas the biblical fast of Yom Kippur can. This year, Tisha B'Av will not be commemorated on the Ninth of Av, for Shabbat falls on that date; we will instead feast and celebrate, and wait until darkness falls before we begin the solemn day. The 9th of Av becomes the 10th of Av instead.

Another calendrical point of interest is that the day of Tisha B'Av mirrors the first day of Pesach. If we sit down to a Seder on a Sunday evening, then Tisha B'Av will also occur on a Sunday evening. Both evenings are times of storytelling and remembrance. They are both nights that are noted for their incredible difference to the rest of the year. *Mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh mikol haleiyot*, we sing at the Seder; "how is this night different from all other nights?" We might be inclined to ask the same question on the one evening of the year that we sit on the floor instead of chairs, that we chant Eicha (the Book of Lamentations) in its unique trope, that we recite dirges and avoid studying Torah.

And yet, this year, our parallel breaks down. Where the calendar guarantees that a Tuesday night Seder would mean a Tuesday night reciting of Eicha, it cannot do so when we sit to Seder on a Friday night, as we did this year. Tisha B'Av must be pushed off by a day. This Friday night, we have feasting instead of fasting.

I think it's very poignant that this clever, careful reflection sometimes has to break, like a stone has been cast into the waters. The story of our freedom on Passover and the story of our tragedy on Tisha B'Av may seem inextricably linked, but they are not. It can be interrupted by the beauty of Shabbat, the day in which we are given a taste of the world to come. It comes, I think, to remind us that we must not fall into the trap of thinking that there must always be more tragedy to come. We can reach toward a time that is better for us all. There is hope in the breaking of patterns, that perhaps all patterns of history can be broken.

When we get there, I hope you have a meaningful fast.
And until then...

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Natasha