

## August 2, 2019/1 Av 5779

Dear chevreh,

Today is Rosh Chodesh Av, the beginning of the Hebrew month of Av. There is a famous Mishnah that is cited towards the end of Ta'anit (4:6) that states:

*"Mishenichnas Av, Mema'atin Besimcha"*

"When the month of Av arrives, we decrease our happiness" (unlike in Adar, the month of Purim, when we increase our happiness.)

It may seem a strange and incongruous message for many of us. Here we are, in beautiful Bucks County in the lushness of our summer. On our secular calendar, this a time we associate with vacations, outdoor enjoyment and being more carefree. On the Jewish calendar, the month of Av (and even a bit earlier, since Tammuz), we are asked to bring sadness and mourning into our consciousness.

We are in a period called The Three Weeks, between the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Tammuz and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av which are considered days of mourning called "bein ha metzarim", within the straits or narrow places, the days of distress. We are approaching Tisha B'Av, the saddest date on the Jewish calendar on which we remember difficult times for the Jewish people as seen throughout history such as the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem, and other calamities which befell the Jewish people. Even if we personally are not in the headspace of mourning right now -and some of us sadly are mourning in our personal lives- we can hold the narrative of our people, and identify with the destruction and loss we have known as a people, much like the glass we break at every wedding -- a reminder that even in our times of joy, somewhere in the world there still exist brokenness and sorrow.

We don't need to look far in the world for brokenness and sorrow. Aside from gathering with our Bucks County communities next Saturday evening (along with Jews all over the world) to chant the sorrowful words of the book of Eicha (Lamentations) in its haunting liturgical melody, we will also gather with Jews in greater Philadelphia in solidarity with refugees. Jews all over the country are gathering in their communities, over 30 Jewish communities so far to do the same.

On the T'ruah website we read,

"Kids in cages. Communities under threat of deportation. Refugees turned away. Muslims banned. Senseless hatred carried out by government agencies.

Humanitarian crises manufactured. People dehumanized. Racism and xenophobia behind it all.

The immigrant-led organization United We Dream is asking allies to hold vigils and protests outside Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) office nationwide. On the holiday of Tisha B'Av (August 10-11, 2019), T'ruah, Bend the Arc, J Street, HIAS, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism are partnering to coordinate Jewish vigils and protests, demanding an end to this unfolding modern-day catastrophe. Last year more than a dozen Jewish communities across the country held similar events, and unfortunately, we have even more reasons to protest today. We must demonstrate publicly that the Jewish community will not turn its back on refugees arriving in our country and our immigrant neighbors already here."

\*\*\*There will be a vigil in Philadelphia near Independence Hall gathering to raise our voices in support of those seeking asylum. Details are below. If you would like to gather with me and other Kehilat HaNahar members, please email me at [rabbidianamiller@gmail.com](mailto:rabbidianamiller@gmail.com) and we will figure out carpooling/caravans/meeting up.

May we all have the courage to do the grieving and mourning we need to do, as well as the strength to fight for justice in the world, staying grounded by being motivated and embraced by love and community connection.

I look forward to seeing you this evening at Shabbat services at 7:30 pm.

Shabbat Shalom and Gut Shabbos,

Rabbi Diana

FOR THESE WE CRY OUT:

A TISHA B'AV VIGIL FOR REFUGEES

Hosted by the Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia

Tisha b'Av is a day of mourning and reflecting - a time when we remember the destruction of Jerusalem and the upheaval and suffering of the exile of the Jewish people from our homeland.

**At 12:00 noon on Sunday, August 11th we will gather near Independence Hall** to affirm our commitment to the core Jewish value of Kavod Habriot, the basic dignity of all of God's creation. As we remember the pain of dispersal and what it means to wander unprotected, we remember that all humanity was created b'Tzelem Elohim,

in God's image, and we are obligated to Love the Stranger, as well as our fellow, as ourselves.

It is in keeping with our tradition's teachings and our people's historic experience, and reflecting the Jewish community's core values that we raise our voice in support of safe and dignified treatment for those who come to this country seeking asylum, shelter and a better life for their families.

Using the Book of Lamentations, traditional Tisha b'Av liturgy, song and fellowship we will reflect how these basic Jewish principles of human dignity and creation in God's image are enshrined in the self-evident truths, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Find more details on the [Facebook event](#).