

A Seder for Fasting on the 17th of Tammuz

Preparations

The fast of the 17th Day of Tammuz is the beginning of ten weeks of reflection that lead to a return to our true selves as we prepare to once again ascend the Mountain Sinai and receive the Ten Teachings , the Second Set of Tablets, on the Day of Atonement. For three weeks we will hear the rebuke of Jeremiah and then for seven weeks we will hear the comforting of Isaiah. These are the prophetic readings of summer. For those who want to prepare, read the first four chapters of Jeremiah and then Chapters 40 to 63 of Isaiah.

If you are unable to attend services on the seventeenth of Tammuz prepare Chapters 32-34 for your discussion of the fast day. The *hapharah* is Isaiah 55:6 – 56-8 but I suggest you add chapter 18 of the Book of 1Kings to bring the spirit of Elijah into your study and discussion.

The Meal

Sanctify the meal and discuss the following:

- 1.) What is or are the Golden Calves of our time?
- 2.) What do you think of Moses shattering sacred objects?
- 3.) What was the role of Aaron?
- 4.) Why a calf, and not a cow?
- 5.) I think of modern bar and bat mitzvahs that celebrate the end of a person's commitment to Judaism as a dance around the golden calf. Others consider bar and bat mitzvah a sacred cow. What do you think?
- 6.) Why are the 13 attributes of Gods mercy (Exodus 32:11) part of the Torah reading for the 17th of Tammuz?
- 7.) What do we learn from the symbolism if the Shattered Tablets that contained the original teachings?
- 8.) Were the original Ten Teachings different from the Second Set received on Yom Kippur?
- 9.) What is your vision of the Third temple?
- 10.) Three weeks of rebuke and seven of comfort match up with the diagram of the ten Sephirot. What does this suggest?

Prayer for the 17th of Tammuz:

Answer us, O Lord, as we learn empathy from our suffering. We humbly accept your presence. We hunger for your love. Rescue and redeem us as we reconstruct our shattered world. Our hands reach up for your teachings. Blessed is our God who answers the afflicted.

Recite Grace after the meal.