

# Curriculum for the Three Weeks

Submitted by the Walder Education Pavilion

**Grade Level:** Elementary - Middle School

**Description:**

A clearly written description of the events that took place during the bein hametzarim as well as the halachos that pertain to this time. Includes a section on why the batei mikdash were destroyed and the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza. Hashkafa questions included. This can be given to students to read on their own during summer vacation or used by counselors in camp settings. Adapted from "The Book of Our Heritage".

**Goals and Objectives:**

Students will recall the events of the Three Weeks and will apply and internalize pertinent halachos and hashkafos.

# Camp Curriculum for the Three Weeks

The following is intended to be a guide for camp counselors to teach information about the Three Weeks to your campers. Please feel free to choose the pages and topics you want to focus on. There are accompanying posters available for purchase, on 1) Sinas Chinam and 2) the tragedies of Shiva Assar B'Tammuz and Tisha B'Av.

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## The Three Weeks

The days between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av are known as the Three Weeks. Many awful things happened to Klal Yisrael during this time, and both Batei Mikdash were destroyed. During this time we display signs of mourning. We do not:

- listen to music
  - dance
- get haircuts
- shave.

We also do not partake in activities for which we need to say *Shehecheyanu* on, like:

- wearing new clothing
- eating new fruits.

## What Happened on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz:

- In the *midbar*, Bnei Yisrael miscalculated the day that Moshe Rabbeinu was expected to come down from Har Sinai with the Torah. Fearing that they would be left without a leader, they made the *eigel*, a golden calf that they worshipped. Moshe Rabbeinu did come down on the correct day and saw people worshipping the *eigel*. He became angry and broke the *luchos*, tablets with the Ten Commandments on them.
- During the times of the second Beit HaMikdosh, Titus, a fierce general of the Roman army, and his men broke through the walls of Yerushalayim.
- A Roman soldier named Apustamus tore and burned a sefer Torah near Beit Choron in Eretz Yisrael.
- An idol was placed in the Beit HaMikdosh.

## The Nine Days

From Rosh Chodesh Av, the 1<sup>st</sup> of Av, until the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, we adopt more signs of mourning.

We do not remodel our homes or make home improvements.

We do not sew, weave, knit or buy clothing.

We also do not wash clothing or wear freshly washed clothing.

We do not wear new shoes.

We do not eat meat or drink wine.

We do not bathe for enjoyment.

# Tisha B'Av

Right before Tisha B'Av starts, we eat a *seudah hamafseket*, an ending meal before the fast. This meal consists of a hardboiled egg dipped in ashes and bread, eaten while sitting on the floor or a low chair.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, Tisha B'Av, we are not allowed to:

- eat or drink
- wash ourselves
- put oil on our bodies
- wear leather shoes
- greet people on the morning of Tisha B'Av.

We sit on low chairs as a sign of mourning from the night the fast starts until midday the next day. On the night the fast starts, we read *Eichah*, which is an account of the pain the Jews experienced when the first Beit HaMikdash was destroyed through the eyes of *Yirmiyahu HaNavi*. We mourn the destruction of the Batei Mikdash all day, along with other tragedies that have befallen Bnei Yisrael, and think about how we can make ourselves worthy of Moshiach.

## Why were the Batei Mikdash destroyed?

- During the first Beit HaMikdash, many of Bnei Yisrael were guilty of *gilui arayot*, *shefichut damim*, and *avodah zara* (forbidden relationships, killing, and worshipping idols).
- During the times of the second Beit HaMikdash, Bnei Yisrael were guilty of *Sinat Chinam*, hating each other for no reason and not treating each other with respect. During the times of the second Beit HaMikdash, the Jews split up into opposing groups and were very mean to each other. There were different types of groups warring with each other. People shamed the Gedolim of the time, and didn't rebuke each other when they saw someone doing something wrong.
- Chazal teach us that it is better that Hashem let His anger out on the wood and stones of the Beit HaMikdash rather than letting His anger out on Bnei Yisrael.
- Some say that the Shechinah will never leave the Kotel, the Western Wall.
- Chazal say that whoever mourns over Yerushalayim will be *zocheh* to see it rebuilt.
- It is said that Moshiach will be born on Tisha B'Av.

## Kamtza and Bar Kamtza

The Gemara recounts a story of one of the causes of the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdosh. At that time, there once was a man who had a party. He invited all his friends including a man named Kamtza. His servant, however, made a mistake and invited Bar Kamtza, the host's enemy, instead.

Bar Kamtza, the enemy, came to the party. When the host saw him, he became angry and demanded that Bar Kamtza leave immediately. Bar Kamtza didn't want to be embarrassed publicly, so he offered first to pay for the cost of what he would eat and drink, but the host said no. Then he offered to pay for half the cost of the party, and finally he begged to pay for the whole party if the host would only let him stay. The host did not agree and had Bar Kamtza taken out.

Since there were Gedolim at the party who did not protest the mean treatment, Bar Kamtza thought that they agreed with the host. He went to the Roman emperor and slandered Bnei Yisrael, saying that they were rebelling against him. He said that if the Jews would see a fly in their cup, they would pick it out and continue to drink, but if the emperor would send an animal as a Korban, they would reject it. He knew that the emperor would be unhappy to hear this and would send an animal as a Korban to see if it was true. The emperor sent a kosher animal to the Beit HaMikdosh to be brought as a Korban, but Bar Kamtza secretly put a *moom*, blemish, on it so that it couldn't be used. Bnei Yisrael couldn't bring the animal as a Korban because of the *moom*, but the emperor thought they were rejecting his offering as a sign of rebellion because he didn't know that Bar Kamtza had put a *moom* on it. The emperor then sent an army to destroy Yerushalayim and the Beit HaMikdosh.

This tragic story came about because of Sinat Chinam, baseless hatred. The host could have let Bar Kamtza stay at his party, but he refused. This embarrassed Bar Kamtza terribly and caused him to want to take revenge on all of the Jews, because they did not stand up for him.

## **Think About It:**

How can we get rid of Sinat Chinam?

What does it mean to love every Jew? How can we do this?

How can you show respect for a friend?

How can you show respect for Gedolim?

How can you help another Jew do the right thing?

In what ways do you see you don't treat other Jews properly and how can you change that?

What can we do to bring Moshiach and the Third Beit Hamikdosh?

What lesson can we learn from the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza about treating people? About Lashon Hara?

Adapted from "The Book of Our Heritage"