

## Rabbi's Column

This coming Shabbat is the 9th day of Av. However, since there is only one fast day which takes priority over Shabbat, it is observed on the 10th of Av this year. We will spend an hour going over some of the traditional depressing literature that is studied on this day.

Yet -

It's complicated.

What are we remembering on this day and why? The destruction of the Temple, for sure - (both of them), but that, by itself, is no longer (in my opinion) enough. When we remember that the Temples were destroyed, and not why they wound up being destroyed and what that meant for the people then, we have barely scratched the surface of what we need to do.

As a reminder, in the Talmud it is mentioned that the First Temple was destroyed because of idolatry, and the Second Temple was destroyed because of Sinat Hinam (a strong hatred for a fellow Jew that was not based on an actual action of that Jew, but merely their political affiliations). The Talmud tells a story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza - but the sponsor of the event who would only let one of those two people to their party was not the actual person at fault. One particular community leader who was not willing to compromise at all sealed the deal, as it were.

I have long been a bit worried that Jews and Israelis seem intent on repeating historical mistakes. In the place of Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, Josephus and Jewish Christians, today we have (with no intention of one-to-one correspondence) movement affiliated folk (Humanists, Reconstructionist, Renewal, Conservative, Reform, Orthodox), non-movement identifying folk (secular Israelis, Ethical Activists, self-hating Jews, post-denominationalists) - all of these in many varieties geographically throughout the world as well as many different political ideologies, not including those people for whom their Jewish identity is secondary to another identity.

I am a member of NAJC, the national Jewish Chaplaincy group. NAJC conventions include Jews from pretty much all of these groups, who focus on the job they do during the year, and not on their different thoughts and practices. This is the kind of activity that helps prevent a repetition of the Sinat Hinam mistake.

Not everyone in the world is a member, of course, which leaves a lot of people who focus on the differences rather than the similarities.

So this Sunday, ponder this: Have we learned how to use power appropriately? How does what we teach have to change because we are no longer oppressed? How do we get the teachers to change? How much do I have to change, so as not to repeat the situations that led to the destruction of the First and Second Jewish Commonwealth?