

**July 29, 2009**  
**Shabbat Shalom!**

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*Tonight begins Tish'ah B'av (the Ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av), the anniversary of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. This day is observed as a time of fasting and mourning in the Jewish tradition. Reform Judaism, at first, did not support the idea of mourning for the Temple because there was no expectation for that ancient center of worship to be rebuilt. As the decades passed, commemorations of Tish'ah B'av began to find their way into Reform congregations and, given the time of this July-or-August observance, summer camps.*

*This coming Friday night, July 31, I will begin the service with a brief reading from the Lamentations, the biblical book assigned to this holiday because of its expressions of despair and sadness over the loss of the first Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE. In response to the Roman's destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70, the rabbis said, in retrospect, "The second Temple was destroyed because of one reason: baseless hatred (sinat chinam)." The fact that the Jews of Judea could not overcome bitter disagreements and unite behind one banner in their approach towards the Roman authorities led to that great tragedy of their time.*

*Baseless hatred is certainly still with us. It emerges when someone believes that he or she is absolutely correct and that there is absolutely no other view on a particular that could bear some truth, and no compromise is possible. We see such hatred in the breakdown of relations between people in neighboring countries, between adherents of different religions or various branches of one faith group, and between members of different political parties in the same country that assert that only the policies for which they advocate are right.*

*The observance of Tish'ah B'av offers us a reminder of how interpersonal and ideological conflict can lead to catastrophe, but how, even in the face of such challenges, we can learn lessons from the past and try to strengthen the common bonds that transcend our differences. May we hold on to the hope that we can find such unity even in our diversity.*

**-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry K.**

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**July 30, 2009**  
**An early Shabbat Shalom!**

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*I will be chanting the V'ahavta when I read Torah tomorrow night - this familiar passage, which immediately follows the declaration of one God, the Shema, in Deuteronomy Chapter 6, is marked with verbs that challenge us to express what we think and believe through words and action.*

*The verbs in the this section are...*

- *V'ahavta (LOVE)*
- *V'shinantam (TEACH/REPEAT THEM)*
- *V'dibarta (SPEAK)*
- *U-k'shartam (BIND THEM)*
- *Uch-tavtam (WRITE/INSCRIBE THEM)*

*Taken together, these words direct us to create close and trusting relationships, to share our values with each other and to a new generation, to hold fast to the principles we live by and to educate others by our example. The V'ahavta paragraph can serve as a curriculum guide for successfully passing on a heritage to a new generation, but it is also about taking on this task as one community. May the values that we practice and teach leave an imprint on us, and may what we do inscribe those lessons on one another's hearts.*

*-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry K.*