

Chagim uMoadim

— from the Masorti Movement



ד'ת"ס

Tu B'Av

Shalom U Bracha:

How do we define love? While it is a universal concept that can be explained in different ways, we will probably agree if we say that love is a feeling related to affection, and can be defined, according to Erich Fromm, as actions based on affection directed towards others or towards oneself. And from a Jewish perspective we can say, as the German philosopher Gottfried Leibnitz defined it, that true and unselfish love is to find pleasure in the happiness of the other. Beautiful!

Is there a specific day to fall in love? We do not fall in love at a specific time except when we are open to new experiences, and this concept was deeply understood by our sages in establishing the celebration of Tu B'Av.

Although it is a small and little known festival, it is one of the most joyful one in the Hebrew calendar, to such an extent that in Israel today it is called the "National Love Festival". But what is its origin and meaning?

The Talmud in the tractate of Ta'anit offers us the following explanation: "There were no such joyous occasions for the Jewish people as Tu B'Av and Yom Hakippurim. In those days, the daughters of Jerusalem went out dressed in white clothes borrowed, not to embarrass those who did not have beautiful clothes, and went dancing in the vineyards on the outskirts of the city; and all the young men who were not married would go there and look. And what would the girls say? Young man, lift your eyes and choose wisely. Do not look only at physical beauty, because charm is false and beauty is vanity. A woman who fears God is the one to be praised".

It is difficult to imagine your rabbi inviting you to dance up in the pulpit in the midst of our fasting or prayers on Yom Kippur, so I would prefer on this occasion to focus on Tu B'Av and not on Yom Kippur. The 15th of the month of Av was the day when women went out to look for their future partners, to seduce with inner beauty and not with the external beauty. Our sages understood that love is a feeling related to affection and that love is to find pleasure in the happiness of the other. And for this they recognized the importance of generating new experiences that will motivate the people to fall in love.

How will we celebrate the coming Tu B'Av? For now, recording it in our agenda as an important day. The rest is about imagination.

Chag Tu B'Av Sameach!!

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Rabbi Hector Epelbaum, born and raised in Buenos Aires, he was deeply involved in the Masorti/Conservative Youth Movement. After earning a Masters Degree in Psychology, he went on to conduct his rabbinical studies at Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano Marshall T. Meyer, and obtained his ordination in Israel at Bet Hamidrash Lelimudei Yahadut, HaRav Shmuel Avidor Hachoen. Rabbi Epelbaum served in Conservative pulpits for over 33 years in Argentina, Israel and the United States. He joined Temple Beth Israel Community as spiritual leader on 2014 until today.



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