Tu beAv

The Masorti Movement, represented by Noam, Marom, Mercaz and Masorti AmLat invites you to celebrate this Tu beAv filled by the most wonderful experiences that each of us keeps in their hearts.

Between hatred and love there is only a thin line

Tu beAv (15th of Av) is celebrated, nowadays, in Israel as a true Valentine's Day. All day long you can watch classical romantic films on TV, and every shop is filled with thematic souvenirs and presents to buy and conquer the loved-one.

There is no doubt that this is The Day of Love in the Jewish calendar.

But I can imagine that you have already noticed that our holiday calendar has its ups and downs, we move from joy to sadness, sometimes with a very short time to prepare ourselves we are asked to move from the intense pain of commemoration, to the joy and happiness for what we have achieved. Let us mention, for example, the transition from Iom Hazikaron, the day in which we honour all the martyrs of Israel to Iom Haatzmaun, only 24 hours later.

But is it possible to move from love to hatred and from hatred to love so easily?

Let's revise the not-so-romantic story of Amnon and Tamar.

“…Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her (…) I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister (...) and lay with her (...) Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her”. (Shmuel 2:13)

Which was the cause of such change of feelings?

Our Sages interpreted in the Mishnah that love which depends on something external, such as the love between “Amnon and Tamar” does not last and it is deemed to disappear and, as in this case, become hatred.

Tu beAv is the holiday of love, which comes right after the most destructive hatred that the Jewish people had to suffer.

Tu beAv is celebrated only a few days after the 9th of Av, day in which both Temples of Jerusalem were destroyed, and also the day in which the last of the generation of the sin of the spies, which had been forbidden to enter the Promised Land, died. Also in this date the city of Betar was captured during the Bar Kojba rebellion, the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492 and it is also believes that the Final Solution was proclaimed during the Shoah during this very day. To this list we can also add the bombing of the AMIA in Buenos Aires, which occurred only one day after the 9th of Av.

How many acts of hatred are performed today only because of the feeling of sinat chinam? There is lack of understanding, lack of willingness to understand each other, to see each other, to listen to each other.

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel says, “There were never happier days for the Jews like the fifteen of Av and Yom Kippur for on those days the daughters of Jerusalem would go out wearing borrowed white clothing (and they) would go and dance in the vineyards…” (Mishna, Masejet Taanit)

In Tu beAv love, joy and laughter come back to life. Tu beAv is a day which allows us to “letaken”, make up for what happened on the 9th of Av. Tu beAv allows us to amend for what caused the greatest catastrophe in the history of our people, groundless hatred (sinat chinam).

Only love can amend for unjustified and excessive hatred.

Only unselfish and deep love towards someone else and towards G-d’s creation can make up for hatred.

Tu beAv is the holiday of love, of unselfish love, of refreshing love.

In this way, we contemplate, once more, the flow of life, the ups and downs between pain and reconstruction, between destruction and renewal.

Because, between hatred and love, there is only a thin line, if we really mean it.

Rab. Deby Grinberg Wajnberg
NOAM (Noar Masorti) Israel