



# Tales of DESTRUCTION

Each year on Tisha B'Av, we read Megillat Eicha and recite *kinnot*. A look at the *kinnot* reveals that many of them are based on a series of Talmudic *aggadot* from Tractate Gittin which focus on the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*. There is tremendous depth to these *aggadot*, which require detailed study, but a quick review reveals overarching principles that can be seen throughout.

- The *aggadot* do not place blame on our enemies, like the Babylonians and Romans, who destroyed the first and second *Batei HaMikdash* respectively, but teach us to search deeply for the problems within. One example is the Midrash that describes a *Bat Kol* (Divine “voice”) telling Nevuzaradan, the general who oversaw the destruction of the first *Beit HaMikdash*, “You burned a burning Temple, you ground ground flour.” In other words, even before the *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed by our enemy, it was considered burnt down and lacking spiritual value due to the sins of the Jewish people. Our Sages teach us that the primary blame for the destruction should be placed on ourselves and lead us to reflect on our actions. This same message indicates that our actions will help repair the damage and ensure the ultimate rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*.
- The *aggadot* tell stories of individuals. For example, the famous story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza describes how one individual was offended when he was embarrassed in front of the nobles of Yerushalayim and sought to seek revenge against the city’s residents,

which ultimately led to the city’s destruction. Our Sages are teaching us that the “everyone is guilty” approach can sometimes lead to nobody taking responsibility, so they prefer to place the responsibility on the actions of one individual. The message is that each and every one of us is capable of causing the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, and by the same token, each of us can bring about the process of rebuilding and redemption.

- The tales of destruction we read on Tisha B'Av are parallel to the *aggadot* recited on Seder Night. The redemption from Egypt is filled with us minimizing, as much as possible, the role of humans or angels in the redemption process, which we attribute fully and wholly to G-d: “I and not an angel, I and not a fiery angel, I am G-d, I the L-rd, it is I and no other.” On Tisha B'Av we find the exact opposite. The blame is placed fully upon ourselves. Our Sages teach us that the redemption from Egypt, entrance into the Land of Israel, and the building of the *Beit HaMikdash* are all gifts bestowed upon us by G-d and not the results of our own power or strength. It is our own sins and misdeeds which caused us to ruin, and ultimately lose, these precious gifts.
- The tales of destruction are written in Gittin, which focuses on the laws of divorce. Perhaps they were placed there to teach us there is a connection between national destruction and the destruction of a home and family. When a private home is destroyed, it is likened to the destruction of the *Beit*

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*HaMikdash*, as our Sages taught: “When a man divorces his first wife, the Altar sheds tears.” In Hebrew, the word *bayit*, home, is used both for a physical home and family, and also for the *Beit HaMikdash*, hinting at a connection between personal and national destruction.

Our Sages teach us, “Any generation in which the Temple is not built, it is as if it had been destroyed in their times” (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1a). Meaning each and every generation is responsible to do their utmost to ensure the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. If a generation does not merit the rebuilding, they cannot blame previous generations, and not even the generation at the time of the actual destruction, but must take the responsibility upon themselves. The destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash* is based on our actions and deeds, and so too is the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. It is not just the general actions of the generation, but our individual deeds.

Where must the rebuilding begin? Within our own homes. In the relationships between husband and wife and within the family unit. In our interpersonal relationships. In our constant striving to build a better society with mutual respect, justice and righteousness. A society of *chesed*, volunteerism and always looking out for one another. As the prophet stated, “Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they that return to her with righteousness” (Yeshayahu 1:27). May we merit the return of G-d’s presence to Tzion speedily in our days.

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## The AMIT Network is an Israeli-wide education network that operates State-religious, secular and ultra-Orthodox schools across the country.

The Network began operating in 1925 when Batya Gottesfeld led a group of Mizrahi Women in the United States to help with education in Israel. From its earliest years, the Network has been dedicated to meeting the challenges of education and society in Israel, starting with the absorption of children who survived the Holocaust, through welcoming the children of immigrants from Middle Eastern countries, and later, with receiving immigrant children from Ethiopia, the former Soviet Union and other countries. Since its inception, AMIT has always been ready to meet the needs of Israel’s children.

According to the Ministry of Education’s data comparisons from the various education networks, AMIT is the leading network in Israel. In examining the indicators set by the Ministry to compare matriculation eligibility, excellence in mathematics and English, violence and drop-out prevention, recruitment to the IDF and National Service, maintaining testing integrity and integrating people with disabilities, AMIT has been ranked as the leading education network in Israel for the fourth year in a row.

Among other things, the AMIT Network is proud to lead IDF and the National Service recruitment

statistics, with an emphasis on significant service. We have the *zechut* to count many officers and combat soldiers among our graduates.

According to the AMIT board’s vision, 70% of AMIT’s schools are in Israel’s social and geographical periphery, while the other 30% are in the center of the country and among strong socioeconomic populations. AMIT’s primary goal is to provide excellence and values-based Jewish education in the periphery and to provide equal opportunity for all of our graduates, regardless of their backgrounds.

The AMIT Network’s educational compass is based on three pillars: *Torat Chaim* as the beating heart of each school, *Klal Yisrael*, and excellence and self-realization. In all of its schools, AMIT promotes values-based education and connections in Israeli society. For the past decade, AMIT has been leading an innovative educational revolution grounded on its cutting-edge Gogya concept, whose main focus is transforming schools into learning educational communities and transferring the focus of learning from teacher to student, thereby creating independent learners who master vital 21st century skills.

AMIT’s hundreds of educational teams specialize in cultural change in schools, adapting them to the educational field of the future and nurturing them into becoming leaders of educational innovation. AMIT understands that in our world in 2021, standing still is actually moving backwards, and it is proud to lead the march forward towards holistic education that incorporates entrepreneurship and creativity.

