



# YOM KIPPUR AND TU B'AV: WHEN LOVE IS THE ONLY ANSWER

The mishnah in tractate Ta'anit makes a strange claim.

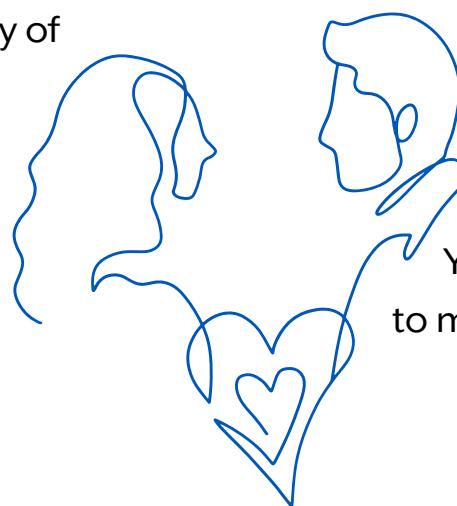


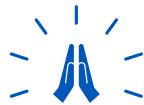
**אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל, לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב וכיום הכפורים.**

**Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur.**  
**(Mishnah Ta'anit 4:8)**

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel explains the reason for this joy is that on Yom Kippur and Tu B'Av (the fifteenth of the month of Av), it was customary for single members of the community to meet each other and find suitable partners.

On the surface, this all seems like a strange pairing of holidays. The traditions and atmospheres of the two could not be more different: Yom Kippur, an auspicious day of judgment traditionally marked with fasting and repenting for our sins of the previous year, and Tu B'Av, the Jewish holiday of love. It is even more strange that a day as auspicious as Yom Kippur be called a "joyous" day dedicated to matchmaking.





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However, if you consider that Tu B'Av follows the emotionally strenuous holiday of Tisha B'Av, you will find one area of significant overlap between the two days. Tisha B'Av commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people since then. Similarly, Yom Kippur is dedicated to strenuous reflection and repentance which can be emotionally devastating for many Jews.



Particularly distressing times like the afternoon of Yom Kippur, as our individual judgments for the year are being “sealed,” and Tu B'Av, celebrated in the aftermath of Tisha B'Av, require unique methods of healing. Perhaps the only way forward after moments like these are with the love, company, support and partnership of others.

Whether you are observing Tu B'Av or Yom Kippur, we encourage you to take a moment to recognize that in those auspicious moments, you aren't alone. Think about the people you can turn to and connect with, the people who you love and care about, recognizing they love and care about you too. It can be easy to feel isolated during challenging moments. Consider this Mishnah an invitation to try to make connections like them. When we are in pain and our guards are down, we can reveal our truest selves more easily, making it easier to form authentic and meaningful connections with one another or open ourselves up to the possibility of doing so. As Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk wrote,

***“there is nothing as whole as a broken heart,”***

because it is ready to be healed by another.

