

Move Yom Hashoah to Tisha B'Av

Framing this unit

This letter, published in the readers' section of the *Davar* newspaper on May 12, 1965, deals with the question of the appropriate time to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah). The writer explains that the existing date of Yom HaShoah, commemorating the great deportation from the Warsaw ghetto, is an artificial date, which causes confusion due to its proximity to Yom HaZikaron (Memorial Day for IDF Soldiers). On the other hand, Tisha B'Av is "free in our times for additional new content," and it is therefore an appropriate date for commemorating the Holocaust. This comment refers to the belief of some that, with the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, Tisha B'Av, the day commemorating the exile and the destruction of the Jewish homeland in 70 CE, is no longer relevant.

Yom HaShoah is commemorated on April 27, the day on which the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began. While this date has been debated for both religious and ideological reasons, it remains the day on which the Holocaust is publicly remembered in Israel with a siren and ceremonies. International Holocaust Remembrance Day takes place on January 27, the date of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

Group Activity

The letter refers to the date of Yom Hashoah, 27 Nisan.

- Why was Yom HaShoah set for this day?
- What, according to the writer, is the problem with this date?
- What is commemorated on Tisha B'Av?
- Why does the writer think that Tisha B'Av is an appropriate day for remembering the Holocaust?
- Why does the writer state that Tisha B'Av is open to new meaning in our times?
- Why do you think the act of remembering is so important in Judaism?
- What do you think about the writer's idea?

Discussion

- Is Tisha B'Av a more appropriate day for marking Holocaust Remembrance Day?
- Do you agree with the letter's opening statement?
"We are all pondering the problem of how to put new meaning into old traditions whose meaning has become empty with time. And yet here we are creating new traditions that are pale and lifeless and achieve the opposite of what was intended."
- The writer wrote that Tisha B'Av is now free for new meaning?
- What, in your opinion, is the meaning of Tisha B'Av after the establishment of Israel?
- Does the integration of new content into an ancient tradition strengthens or damages tradition?

- What does Yom HaShoah mean to you?
- Do you think it is important to mark the Holocaust with a day of remembrance?

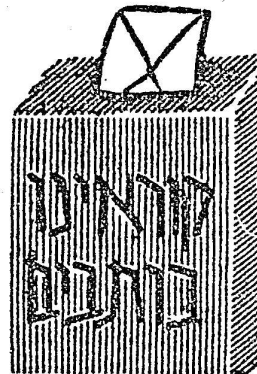
Creative Activity

- From the perspective of a Holocaust survivor, write a letter to *Davar* explaining your opinion regarding a separate day for Holocaust remembrance.

Primary sources in this lesson

ייקבע יום השואה בתשעה באב

דבריה של איטה קאליש («קור»
אינו כותבים, «דבר», ז' אייר
תשכ"ה) הם דברים נכוחים. שגם
כותב הטורים האלה הציע אותם
בשעתו. (בשיחה עם כתב «מח"
ניים»). אנו מתחבטים כולנו בכע"
יה, כיצד למלא תוכן מסורות
ישנות, שהזמן רוקנן. והנה אנו
יוצרים בידים מסורות חדשות,
שהן היוויות. נטולות חיות ומ"
שיגות ההיפך מן המכוון. «יום



השואה" המלאכותי, שבוע לפני
יום הזכרון להללי צה"ל, יוצר
כפילות מטרידה של ימי אבל
בתוך ההכנות ליום העצמאות,
ותורם חלקו לעייפות הנשמה ב"
שמחת ההג הגדול לאומה, רק
תשעה באב, היום שנעשה
פנוי בזמנו לתוספת
תוכן חדש, עשוי לשמש מסג"
רת הולמת, מוכרת על ידי כל
חלקי העם בארץ ובחו"ל, לזכר
השואה והגבורה שלא יתחלל,
ז' באייר תשכ"ה. יש שלום