



When Was the Book of Lamentations Written?



The common conception is that the book of Lamentations, which mourns the destruction of the first Holy Temple and the ensuing exile of the Jewish nation, was written in reaction to those tragic events. Many paintings depict the prophet Jeremiah, the author of Lamentations, penning the work while in the background Jerusalem and the Temple are going up in smoke.

In actuality, the widely accepted Jewish view is that Lamentations (or at least the bulk of it) was penned years before the actual calamitous events it depicts.

The first Temple was destroyed in the year 423 BCE. Seventeen years earlier, G-d instructed Jeremiah, "Take for yourself a scroll and write upon it all the words that I have spoken to you concerning Israel and concerning Judah ... Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the evil that I plan to do to them, in order that they should repent, each man of his evil way, and I will forgive their iniquity and their sin."

Jeremiah, who was imprisoned at the time (apparently because King Jehoiakim was tired of listening to Jeremiah's prophecies foretelling the fall of Jerusalem), dictated to his devoted student Baruch ben Neriah three chapters, each chapter consisting of 22 verses, each verse

beginning with a different letter, following the order of the Hebrew alphabet. These chapters vividly and heart-wrenchingly describe the tragedies and calamities that would befall Judah. The chapters speak in past tense, lamenting these events as if they had already occurred.

Baruch wrote these chapters on a scroll and, at the prophet's instruction, read them to the people gathered in the Temple. Ultimately, the document was read before King Jehoiakim, who upon hearing only the first few verses callously tossed the scroll into the fireplace.

G-d then instructed Jeremiah to rewrite the prophecies. Jeremiah again dictated the prophecies to his student, this time adding an additional chapter—one that contained 66 verses, the first three starting with the letter aleph, the next three with a beit, and so on.

The first three chapters that Jeremiah wrote constitute chapters 1, 2 and 4 of the book of Lamentations. The 66-verse chapter he added is chapter 3. Chapter 5 — the only chapter that isn't an alphabetical acrostic, though it too contains 22 verses — was added by Jeremiah at a later time.

(Chapter 4 was originally composed as a eulogy for King Josiah (Yoshiyahu), Jehoiakim's father. Unlike Jehoiakim, Josiah was a truly saintly individual, as the Torah testifies (II Kings 23:25): "Before him there was no king like him who returned to G-d with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to the entire Torah of Moses, and after him no one [of his stature] arose.")

And indeed, seventeen years later, on the ninth of Av in the year 3338 from creation, the Temple was destroyed and the Jews led into captivity—precisely as Jeremiah had prophesied.

Ever since, the book of Lamentations is read every year on the eve of the ninth of Av.

May G-d soon comfort us and usher in the time when we will be doubly consoled with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

(by Naftali Silberberg from <https://www.chabad.org/>)

Be Happy (Even Now)!

The Gemara (Ta'anit 29a) teaches: "When the month of Av enters, we lessen our Simcha / happiness." This lessening of Simcha is reflected in the restrictions we observe during this period, such as not making weddings. However, asks R' Menachem Boruch Yaveh shlita (Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chayei Torah-Lublin in Yerushalayim), why doesn't the Gemara say, "When the month of Av enters, we mourn for the Temple"? What is the "Simcha" that we are lessening?

He explains: King David instructs us (Tehilim 100:2), "Serve Hashem with Simcha." That is Hashem's Will. Indeed, the Torah (Devarim 28:47) attributes the suffering of the exile to the fact that "you did not serve Hashem, your Elokim, with Simcha and goodness of heart." Furthermore, the prophet tells us that we will be redeemed in the merit of Simcha, as it says (Yeshayah 55:12), "For you will go out with Simcha." Thus, the Gemara is reminding us that we must always be in a state of Simcha—just, a little less so during this time period.

Having Simcha does not negate the need to mourn for the Bet Hamikdash. The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 1:3) states: "It is appropriate for every G-d-fearing person to mourn for the Bet Hamikdash [on a daily basis]." Even so, cautions the Mishnah Berurah: "Torah study and prayer should be with Simcha."

R' Yaveh continues: Indeed, our Simcha increases when we realize that, every day, we are that much closer to the ultimate redemption. Then we will see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah (8:19) that the four fast days we observe to commemorate the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash will themselves become days of Simcha. (Metikut Ha'moadim: Purimp.13)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz rom Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to **Shmuel Siegel**
on the loss of his mother, **Renee Siegel, a"h.**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

The family is sitting shiva at 2900 Smith Avenue.
Shacharit on Friday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 6:45 a.m. & on Sunday at 8:30 a.m.
Minchah on Friday at 3:00 p.m.
Ma'ariv on Motzei Shabbat at 9:18 p.m.
Minchah/Ma'ariv on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday at 8:15 p.m.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Binyomin Gutman	6 Av - Sunday night / Monday	for mother	Ahuva bas Mordechai HaLevi
Steven Deutsch	6 Av - Sunday night / Monday	for mother	Rivkah bas Meyer
Joseph Zakar	10 Av - Thursday night / Friday	for mother	Chaya Rivka bas Yaakov

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 7/21 — 3 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 7/22 — 4 Av

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:33 a.m.
Minchah — 7:55 p.m.
Shiur — after Minchah
Ma'ariv — 9:12 p.m.

Sunday, 7/23 — 5 Av

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Siyum by Rabbi Kaplan — after Shacharit
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Monday, 7/24 — 6 Av

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Tuesday, 7/25 — 7 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

Wednesday — Erev Tisha B'Av, 7/26 — 8 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Mincha — 5:30 p.m.
Fast Begins — 8:25 p.m.
Ma'ariv and Eichah — 9:00 p.m.

Thursday — Tisha B'Av, 7/27 — 9 Av

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Kinos — Until 12:00 noon
Chatzos — 1:12 p.m.
Early Mincha — 2:00 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:55 p.m.
Fast Ends — 8:55 p.m.

Friday, 7/28 — 10 Av

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 8:04 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.