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BIBLICAL TOPICS FOR STUDY – JEWISH STUDIES – TISHA B'AV

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In this study we will comment on an important date in the Jewish calendar, whose origin is not biblical, but was created by rabbis to mourn some disasters that occurred in the history of Israel, practically after the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (although the Jewish books mention it since ancient times in the OT, but it is not recorded in the Bible). This is about Tisha B'Av (9th day of the month of Av), that is, the 5th month of the Hebrew calendar corresponding to July-August in the Gregorian calendar. The rabbis established this date for the Jewish fast of mourning over these facts.

In the Bible there is mention of this month in some events that occurred before the Babylonian exile and even after, but they are not related to catastrophes for the Jews. For example: the death of Aaron on Mount Hor, on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt (Num. 33: 38) and the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem in 458 BC on the first day of the fifth month in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes I (465–424 BC), after 4 months of journey (Ezr. 7: 8-9).

Jeremiah's book of Lamentations is a song of lament for the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, as if reflecting the abandonment of the divine presence itself and God's displeasure with them for their conduct, in addition to the feeling of sadness and longing for the homeland. Later, this song of lamentation for the destruction of the First Temple also became a book of lamentation for the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus and for the subsequent disasters that occurred in the history of Israel in the month of Av until the present day.

Whatever the cause, coincidence or not, the only certainty we have is that God allowed these incidents on practically the same date. Perhaps the Jewish people kept the distant image of the terrible God of Sinai, even failing to pronounce His name later; and this, in the memory of a people for generations, has created a distortion of His image and His true reasons for so many tragedies, instead of evoking and making felt in the depths of each soul the presence of a God of love, real and alive to this day, whose sole purpose is to bring His children back into His presence to comfort them in their pain and forgive their sins. In short, make them know Him as He truly is, through a tangible and personal experience with each of His children.

When we study General History and observe each event, especially those that ended in war and genocide, we can notice that Israel's disasters reflect humanity's disasters. In other words, no one is 'saint', neither side is right. Cruelty has no religion, sex, color,

race, age or nation. It is merely the result of the wickedness of the serpent, implanted in the human race in Eden. Therefore, this is a text to make us meditate on many things.

WHAT HAPPENS ON TISHA B'AV?



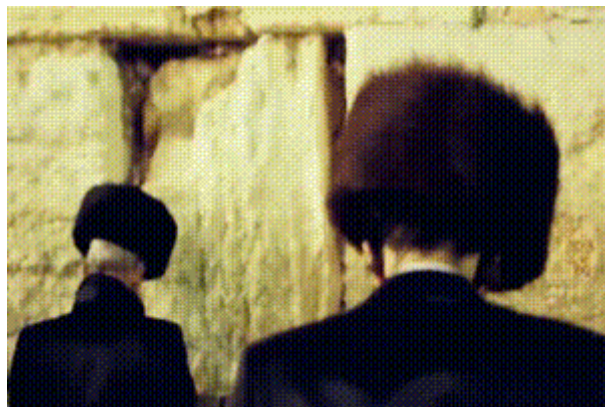
Jews observe a complete fast, as on Yom Kippur; they sit on low chairs or lie on the floor, as in Shivah (first 7 days of mourning for a family member). They do not wear leather clothing, bathe or shave. This is so that the 9th of Av will be remembered with great sadness. They greet people just by bowing their heads. At the Western Wall in Jerusalem, people sleep on the floor, spending the night reading the Book of Lamentations, the book of Job and the Kinnot (lament poems). This is the only day on which they place a black curtain (parokhet) over the Aron Kodesh (the holy ark) and the Torah is not studied, as a sign of a day of great mourning for them. Aron Kodesh (the 'holy ark') is a receptacle kept in the Hekhál ('palace' or 'sanctuary'; hékâl or hekhal derives from the Sumerian expression: É GAL = Great House), the name given in the OT for the Holy Place in the Tabernacle or the Temple [the Holy of Holies was called Debir],

a small ornate enclosure containing the Sifrei Torah (the five books of the Torah) of a synagogue. It is usually positioned on the wall facing Jerusalem. The Jews look in that direction and pray.



Aron Kodesh on Tisha B'Av, covered in the synagogue

WHY DO JEWS SWAY DURING PRAYERS?



There are several explanations for this:

First, when they read the Torah, they recall the moment when it was given to Moses and the people, with fear and trembling, because of the great manifestation of God. And the movement of the body externalizes this fear.

Secondly, during prayer, the whole body participates in worship with its emotions, not just the soul, therefore, they move according to the words that come out of their mouths. And this happens as a way of connecting with the Creator.

Thirdly, the Bible says that “The human spirit is the lamp of the Lord, searching every inmost part.” (Prov. 20: 27). For them, ‘The human spirit’ in this verse refers to the conscience, which was given to us by the Lord to enlighten our thoughts, motivations, emotions and attitudes. Through the conscience (our spirit), God sees deeply into our hearts. Therefore, it can judge us, that is, approve or disapprove the most intimate intentions and thoughts of our being. Even without knowing the Bible, even after the fall of Adam and Eve, God left within man the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. This is often instinctive in man, but it becomes clearer and more correct when he also has knowledge of the word of God (Ps. 119: 105). The Mishnah and the Hebrew Kabbalah write this verse as: “The soul of man is the candle of God,” the soul that is lit like fire during prayer, therefore, moves upwards, according to them, in a constant effort to escape this material world and cling to its divine source.

But it is not during every prayer that they move back and forth. The central prayer of the Jewish liturgy, the Amidah (תפילת העמידה, Tefilat HaAmidah, ‘The Standing Prayer’), is a time of worship, so one does not sway at this time because it is like being in the presence of the King of Kings. Then one should stand erect, just as one would before a mortal monarch, not daring to move. The Amidah is also called the Shemoneh Esreh (שמונה עשרה ‘eighteen’), referring to the original number of blessings, which actually consists of nineteen, for the 15th prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and of the throne of David (coming of the Messiah) was split into two. It is recited three times a day, at the three times of prayer for observant Jews: morning (Shacharit), afternoon (Mincha), and evening (Ma’ariv). The Amidah is found in the siddur, the traditional Jewish prayer book, along with other prayers. It is recited standing with feet firmly together, and preferably while facing Jerusalem.

• THE DESTRUCTION OF THE 1ST TEMPLE IN 586 BCE

The Bible writes about this subject in some passages:

On the 10th day of the 10th month (Tevet = December-January) of the ninth year of Zedekiah (between 589 and 588 BC), the Babylonians began the siege of Jerusalem (1 Kin. 25: 1) and it was besieged until his 11th year of reign (1 Kin. 25: 2), i.e. 1 ½ year of siege (586 BC).

On the 9th day of the 4th month (Tammuz = June-July), the city was broken into (2 Kin. 25: 3; Jer. 39: 2 and Jer. 52: 6-7).

On the 10th day of the 5th month (Av = July-August) they burned the House of the Lord, the king’s house, all the houses in Jerusalem and all the important buildings and broke down the walls of Jerusalem (Jer. 52: 12-14, that is, 1 month after Jer. 52: 6-7), they destroyed and looted the temple utensils (Jer. 52: 17-23).

The passage from 2 Kin. 25: 8-9 says that on the 7th day of the 5th month, Nebuzaradan came and burned the city. This difference between Jer. 52: 12-14 (10th day of the 5th month) and 2 Kin. 25: 8-9 (7th day of the 5th month) may perhaps refer to the fact that these three days correspond to the time to free Jeremiah from prison and prepare the destruction of the city with Babylonian’s army or else, the time for total destruction.



Therefore, Zechariah writes about the four post-exilic fasts (Zech. 7: 3 and 5; Zech. 8: 19), when the Jews remembered the destruction of the first temple:

- Fourth month (Tammuz = June-July; 2 Kin. 25: 3) – the city of Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians.

- Fifth month (Av = July-August; 2 Kin. 25: 8) – the Temple was burned.
- Seventh month (Ethanim or Tishri = September-October; Jer. 41: 1; 2 Kin. 25: 25) – Gedaliah was slain (Jer. 41: 1). Gedaliah (Jer. 40: 5 – son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan) was whom the king of Babylon appointed governor of the cities of Judah. This fast is not to be confused with the fast of the Atonement Day (Ex. 30: 10; Lev. 16: 29-34; Lev. 23: 26-32), ‘Yom Kippur.’
- Tenth month (Tevet = December-January; 2 Kin. 25: 1; Ezek. 24: 1) – when the Babylonian army besieged the city, 1 ½ years before breaking into it. It is the 1st of four, in the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign.

Archaeological research provides information about the weaponry and techniques used by the Babylonians during the siege and destruction of the city:

- Battering Rams: wooden objects with iron tips to hit walls until they collapse. They ranged from small portable ones to large ones, mounted on mobile towers.
- Siege towers: Tall towers mounted on wheels to raise soldiers above city walls and allow them to fight hand-to-hand with defenders.
- Slingshots (a small catapult): they were projectile-throwing devices, similar to a catapult, to launch stones and other objects over long distances, in order to attack the defenders of the city from the walls.
- Siege and blockade: They built fortifications around the city to keep out supplies and used patrols to intercept caravans trying to enter or leave the city.
- Espionage: was to obtain information about the defenses and conditions of citizens. This helped them plan their attack tactics.

Archaeological excavations also confirm that Jerusalem and the surrounding area were destroyed and depopulated, probably by fires, including with the aim of preventing Egypt from settling there. The little that was left was given to the poorest to plant vineyards for their survival (Jer. 39: 10). According to information from historians and archaeological finds in Babylon and Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar even entered there, but Egypt was not under his control.

The rabbis later decided on the date of 9th Av for the day of lamentation over the destruction of the temple.

• THE DESTRUCTION OF THE 2ND TEMPLE IN 70 CE

The destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 CE occurred in the First Jewish-Roman War (66-73 CE), sometimes called the great Jewish revolt, the first of three major rebellions of the Jews in Judea against the Roman Empire.

It began in 66 CE, initially due to religious tensions between Greeks and Jews with protests against taxation and attacks on Roman citizens. Then, the Roman legions under the command of Titus (Titus Flavius Vespasian Augustus) besieged Jerusalem and destroying the center of rebel resistance on 1st August, 67 CE, culminating in the destruction of the temple sometime in August, 70 CE, defeating the Jewish remaining forces [3 ½ years]. There is a reference to August 30th, 70 CE [Bunson, Matthew (1995). *A Dictionary of the Roman Empire*. Oxford University Press. P. 212. ISBN 978-0-19-510233-8], but perhaps it is a little disconnected from what the Jews call Tisha B’Av (9th day of the month of Av).

There was a difference between Pompey’s attitude when he entered Jerusalem in 63 BCE, annexing the province of Judea to the Roman Republic, and Titus’ attitude, in 70 CE. Pompey entered the Holy of Holies with his officers, which was a serious insult to the Jews. However, out of respect for the sanctity of the temple, he ordered that nothing

should be removed or damaged. Perhaps, Pompey considered necessary to demonstrate his power by entering the temple, but showed his willingness to respect the Jewish faith and let their holy place inviolate, unless the Jews forced him to destroy it.

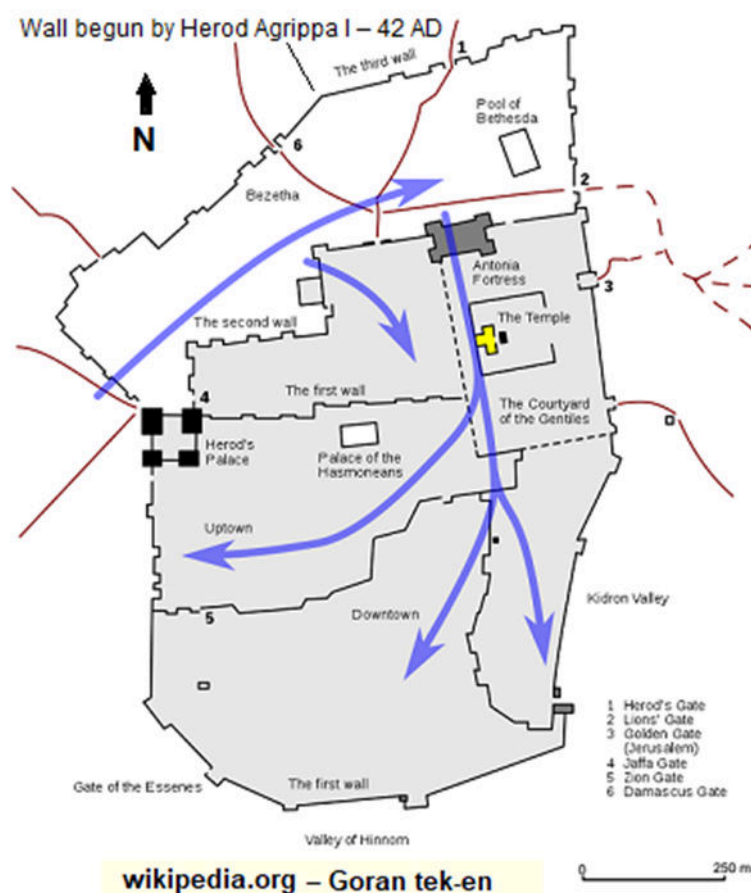
Titus, on the contrary, besieged the city with three legions (V Macedonica, XII Fulminata, XV Apollinaris) on the western side and a fourth (X Fretensis) on the Mount of Olives, to the east. He cut off the food and the water to the city; he allowed the entry of some Jews to celebrate Passover, and then, denying their exit. After unsuccessful attempts of negotiation between Jews and Romans, Titus entered with his legions, destroying the outer part of the walls and crucifying the Jews who deserted around the walls. The Jews were surrendering because of hunger. The Romans took advantage of this weakness, breaking the inner parts of the walls, and entering the city. They took the Fortress Antonia, which was not only a strong watchtower, but also the residence of the Roman procurator when he was in Jerusalem. More than one million people (according to Flavius Josephus), or nineteen-seven thousand (according to other historians), were killed during the siege, most of them Jews. Thousands of people were captured and enslaved. Many escaped to sites near the Mediterranean.



The first city wall, the innermost, was built in the 2nd century BCE by the early Hasmonean kings on the foundations of an earlier wall built by the kings of Judah, because after Nehemiah rebuilt the city in the time of the Persians, it was again invaded by the troops of Antiochus Epiphanes, and once again the integrity of its walls was lost during the time of the Maccabees. This wall surrounded the lower and upper city, forming the core of Jerusalem. Later, as the city grew, a second wall was built further north, extending protection to newer neighborhoods and commercial districts. By the 40s CE, the city had expanded further north, leading to the construction of a third wall (begun by King Herod Agrippa I around 42 CE) protecting the suburb of Bezetha, but its construction was interrupted by Agrippa himself out of fear of Claudius Caesar (41-54 AD), “lest he should suspect that so strong a wall was built in order to make some

innovation in public affairs; for the city could no way have been taken if that wall had been finished in the manner it was begun; as its parts were connected together by stones twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad, which could never have been either easily undermined by any iron tools, or shaken by any engines.” [Josephus, War of the Jews v. iv. § 2]

However, when the Jewish revolt began in 66 CE, the Jewish rebels completed the third wall to fortify the city against the impending Roman attack. Because of its hasty construction, the third wall was weaker than the previous ones, leaving a vulnerable spot in the city’s defenses that the Romans would later exploit during the siege. The Romans began their attack on the city from the newly completed third wall. Five days later, Roman battering rams breached the middle section of the second wall.



Progress of the Roman army during the siege by Titus – 70 CE (three walls)

Thus, within three weeks, the Roman army breached the two outer city walls, but Jewish resistance prevented them from penetrating the first (built in the 2nd century BC), the thickest and the oldest of the three. It was the seventeenth of Tammuz (Tammuz = June-July), when the first breach was made in the wall by the Romans, and three weeks later, on the 9th of Av, their army managed to penetrate the Temple, plunder it and destroy it. [Flavius Josephus – The War of the Jews, book 4, chapters 1 to 4].

The Romans set fire to the Temple (there is disagreement as to whether this was on Titus’ orders or merely a torch accidentally thrown by a soldier). Resistance continued until September, but finally the upper and lower parts of the city were also taken and the city was completely burned. Herod’s palace fell on 7th September, and the city came

completely under Roman control on 8th September. Titus spared only the three towers of the Herodian citadel (Phasaelus, Hippicus, and Mariamne) as a testament to the city's former power, as well as a large part of the wall that surrounded the city on the west side. According to historians, this wall was spared to provide a camp for those in the garrison [in the Upper City]; the towers [the three forts] were also spared, in order to demonstrate to future generations what kind of city Jerusalem was, how well fortified, and which the valiant Romans had subdued; but the other parts of the walls and the city were completely destroyed.

With the destruction of the temple complex, the Romans began to systematically destroy Jerusalem, from the lower city to the Pool of Siloam; it was completely set on fire. The city was plundered and the sacred objects taken to Rome. In the south wall of the temple, the Roman soldiers sacrificed eagles to their gods.

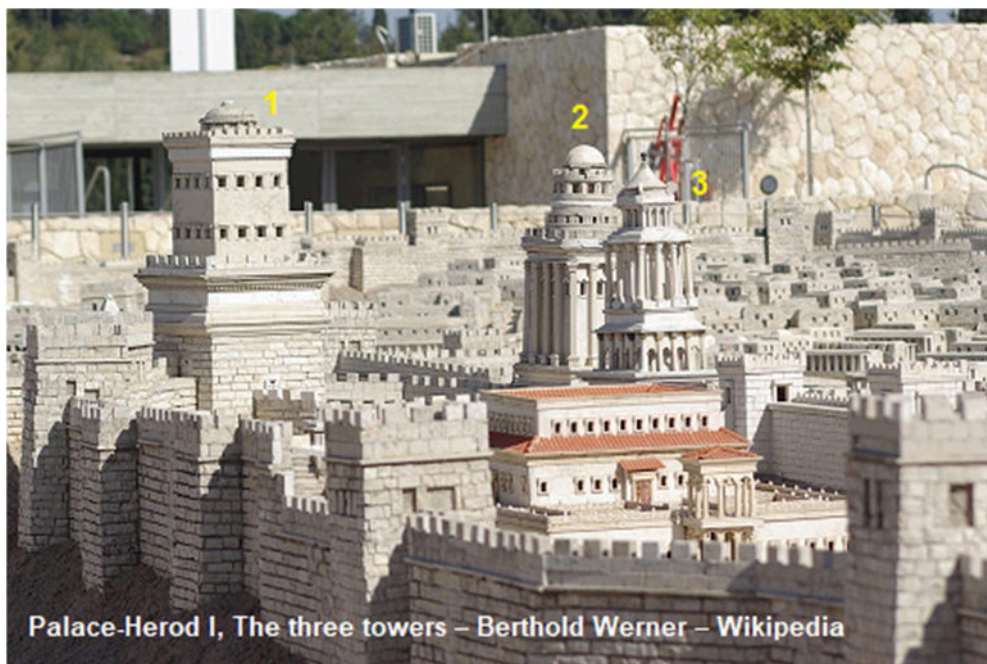


Image above: Model of Herod's Palace in Jerusalem showing the First Wall and, from left to right, its three towers: Phasaelus or Phasael, and Hippicus, and Mariamne.

On the north side of Herod's Palace, next to the wall, were the three great towers that protected it:

1. Phasael Tower was the largest and was named after Phasael, Herod's brother, and was 45 meters high;

2. Hippicus Tower was named after a friend of Herod and was 40 meters high; it was rebuilt on its original foundation and became known as the Tower of David.

3. Mariamne Tower – it was 23 meters high; it was the most beautiful and was built in honor of Mariane I, Herod's second wife, whom he had killed.

Three Zealot leaders dominated Jerusalem at the time, opposing the other two religious-political parties (the Sadducees and the Pharisees) and other extremist groups such as the Sicarii. These leaders were Simon bar Giora, John of Gischala, and Eleazar ben Simon. Although they were Zealots, the three leaders had separate groups that also rivaled each other, taking control of different parts of the city and the temple. It is not

known how Eleazar ben Simon died. After Titus' invasion, Simon bar Giora and John of Gischala surrendered to the Romans. They were taken as captives in chains to Rome to glorify Titus' triumph. John of Gischala was sentenced to life imprisonment. Simon bar Giora was executed; he died with a rope around his neck, dragged to the Forum, and thrown under the Tarpeian Rock (a rock on the Capitoline Hill). Other historical sources say that he was hanged in the Mamertine Prison (the medieval name given to a prison built around 640–616 BCE). It is not known exactly whether the apostle Peter was imprisoned there. Paul awaited his trial by Nero in a house south of the Campus Martius.

After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city and its temple, there were still a few strongholds in which the rebels continued to hold out: Herodium, Machaerus, and Masada. Both Herodium and Machaerus fell to the Roman army within the next two years, with Masada remaining as the final stronghold of the Jewish rebels.

Herodium (Latin: Herodium; Hebrew, herodion: הרודיון) is a circular hill 6.9 miles (11.1 km) south of Jerusalem in the Judean Desert (the actual distance is a little over 7.8 miles (12.5 km) and 5 km (3.1 mi) southeast of Bethlehem. It was a fortified palace built between 22–15 BCE by Herod the Great, and where he was also buried in 4 BCE. During the First Great Jewish Revolt, Jewish rebels hid there from the Roman legions, but were defeated in 71 CE. They had converted Herod's dining hall into a synagogue. Sixty years later, at the beginning of the Third Great Jewish Revolt (132–135 CE), Bar Kokhba and other Jewish rebels (131–132 CE) retook it and hid in its ruins and turned them into an impenetrable fort, defending it for three years from Rome's best soldiers. Simon Bar Kokhba made Herodium his secondary headquarters, under the command of Yeshua ben Galgula. Archaeological evidence for the revolt has been found throughout the site, from the outbuildings to the water system beneath the mountain. Within the water system, support walls built by the rebels were discovered, and another cave system was found. Inside one of the caves, charred wood was found that dated to the time of the revolt [source: Wikipedia].

Machaerus (In Greek, Machairoús, Μαχαιρούς, from Ancient Greek: μάχαιρα, lit. 'makhaira' [a sword]; Hebrew: מכור; mechver) was a fortified hill located in present-day Jordan, 24 km southeast of the mouth of the Jordan River, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. The fortress was built by the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus around 90 BCE and destroyed by Aulus Gabinius, a general of Pompey, in 57 BCE. It was then rebuilt by King Herod the Great in 30 BCE as a military base, controlling the territories east of the Jordan River. After his death, the fortress passed to his son Herod Antipas, who during this period imprisoned John the Baptist there and beheaded him. After Antipas' death in 39 CE, the fortification was under the command of Herod Agrippa I until 44 CE, and then under direct Roman control. In 66 CE, it was a stronghold of Jewish rebels during the First Jewish-Roman War. The fortress fell after Herod the Great, to the Roman general Lucilius Bassus.

One of the last acts of this war [the last 3 ½ years] was the destruction of the Masada Fortress on April 16th, 73 CE, a steep plateau southwest of the Dead Sea, a natural fortress built by Herod the Great between 37 and 31 BCE as a palace and a place of refuge in case of revolt. Masada (מצדה, metzada), means 'safe place' or 'fortress.' The fortress also contained storehouses with an abundant supply of food, barracks, an arsenal, and a series of cisterns (with a capacity of about 40,000 cubic meters) that were replenished with rainwater. Masada was occupied by the rebellious Sicarii at the time of its destruction by the Romans. The Sicarii were an extremist group within the Zealot party. According to Flavius Josephus, before the Roman troops entered the fortress, the 960 Sicarii set fire to all the buildings except the food stores and killed each other so as not to be taken prisoner. Only two women and five children were found alive. However, other scholars say that

there is other archaeological evidence for this account, and Josephus may have been mistaken, referring to a similar event during the Siege of Yodfat in lower Galilee in July 20th, 67 CE, when he himself surrendered to the Romans so as not to die along with his only remaining rebel companion inside the cave where they were hiding.



Location of Herodium, Machaerus and Masada

• BAR KOCHBA REVOLT IN 135 CE

Bar Kochba Revolt (or The Third Jewish-Roman War) occurred after the journey of the Emperor Hadrian (117-138) to the east between 130 and 131 CE, making clear his intention to revive Hellenism in the region of Judea. He intended to rebuild Jerusalem as a Greek city, with statues, public baths and noisy centers of secular life.

The Holy City was rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian in 131 CE on the ruins left by the immeasurable destruction of Titus (70 CE), and according to his will, it was named Aelia Capitolina (in Latin: Colonia Aelia Capitolina). The word Aelia in Latin is derived from the Arabic term, Iliya, which the Muslims once used to Jerusalem (others say it is because of the emperor's birth name, Caesar Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus); 'Capitolina' because the new city was dedicated to Jupiter Capitoline (Zeus to the Greeks), to whom a temple was built in the place of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Next to Golgotha (where Jesus was crucified) he constructed a temple to the Greek goddess Aphrodite (Venus to the Romans).

The former province of Judea came to be called Syria Palaestina – a way of trying to erase the memory of the Jewish presence in that region, making them remember the Philistines, the ancient inhabitants of the region in biblical times. The Jews were forbidden to enter Aelia Capitolina under penalty of death, except on Passover.

In the Edict of Hadrian (r. 117-138) circumcision was forbidden (considered by the Romans as a mutilation) and, because of the Jewish resistance, the teaching of the Torah was also prohibited as well as the ordination of new rabbis.

Thus, at the end of his reign, the third Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire or 'The Third Jewish-Roman War' (from 132 to the end of 135 and beginning of 136 CE) arose within Judea. It is also known as the 'war of extermination' (מלחמת השמדה, *milchamet hashmada*) or 'Bar Kochba Revolt' (מֶרֶד בָּר כּוֹכְבָּא, *Mered Bar Kōkbā*).

Of the three revolts, this is the one that seems to have the least accurate historical information, both in relation to the leader himself and the accounts of the fighting; the Jewish apocryphal books are inconsistent and there are many rabbinical stories told differently, as Simon Bar Kokhba had many supporters but also many opponents. At least the little archaeological evidence that has been found recently assures us that he was a real character, that there was an extremely difficult and violent war on both sides, and that it left its clear mark on the history of the Jews and other nations. Detailed accounts of certain torture methods, from both sides, end up becoming tendentious, however, it shows us the extent to which human cruelty can dominate someone's mind.



The city was occupied by Roman legionaries and guarded by the Legio X Fretensis or X Legion Fretensis (the 'Tenth Legion of the Strait'; 'Strait' in the geographical sense, for Fretensis means 'narrow passage'), created by Emperor Octavian (Caesar Augustus) in 41-40 BCE to fight the civil wars of the Roman Republic and this legion lasted, at least, until the 1st decade of the 5th century, more precisely 410 CE.

The revolt was led by Shimon ben Kozba (Simeon ben Kosba), who would later become known as Bar Kokhba or Kochba (in Aramaic meaning: 'Son of the Star'), who the Jews believed to be the Messiah of Israel and ruled in Jerusalem for two and a half years. The newly independent state minted its own coins: 1) the silver tetradrachm on the obverse with the Temple on the obverse and the word 'Jerusalem'; on the reverse, a lulav (לולב, a branch of date palm) and etrog (citron) together with the inscription "Year 1 to the freedom of Israel" and 2) the trumpets on the obverse with the writing "To the freedom of Jerusalem"; on the reverse: a lyre and the writing "Year 2 to the freedom of Israel silver denarius with two" written in Paleo-Hebrew alphabet.

Historians do not know his real name. The name Shimon ben Kozba comes from the rabbinical sources. Another tangible piece of evidence of the revolt was a set of papyri

containing Bar Kokhba's orders during the last year of the revolt, found in the 'Cave of Letters' in the Judean Desert by Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin.

In fact, the person who gave him this new name (Bar Kokhba) was Rabbi Akiva (Akiva ben Yosef, 40-135 CE), because he had recognized in him the Davidic Messiah. He based himself on Num. 24: 17: "a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." There is no clear evidence that he himself claimed to be the Messiah. Bar Kochba was named nasi (נָשִׂיא 'prince') of the provisional state of the rebels, and a large part of the population of Judea considered him the messiah of Judaism who would restore Jewish national independence. Nasi was the name given to the prince of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the leader of the Sanhedrin in the period of the Second Temple and in the Roman period. On the other hand, the Jewish faction that was against the confrontation with the Romans criticized Rabbi Akiva's attitude. Bar Kochba wrongly suspected that his elderly uncle, Rabbi Elazar HaModai (also known as Eleazar of Modi'im), knew his military secrets. Enraged, he kicked and killed him [this reference is not historical, but from apocryphal books and rabbinical sources]. The Jews had their hopes frustrated and his rivals called him 'Bar Kosiba', which means 'son of lies' (Kosiba is the Hebrew word for 'liar'). Akiva refused to obey Hadrian's Edict, continuing to lead the Jewish people. Caught by teaching the Torah, he was condemned and skinned alive.

The exact extent of Bar Kokhba's control remains unclear. It is widely accepted that the rebels held all of Judea, including the Mountains and Desert and parts of the northern Negev Desert. However, some scholars believe that rebel control may have extended beyond Judea, to the Galilee and Golan Heights. In 2015, 40 caves were identified that served as hiding places at the time of the revolt, some containing coins minted by Bar Kokhba, suggesting that Samaria was also included, as were the Jews of Perea.

The Jewish rebels attacked Roman legionaries and civilians. The Roman general Sextus Julius Severus, with ten legions and auxiliary troops (about a hundred thousand men in all), used the same tactics as the Jewish guerrillas: he divided his forces into groups of small mobile units, commanded by tribunes and centurions, forming rapid reaction groups that could respond promptly whenever reports of guerrilla activity arrived. In addition, he located and surrounded rebel strongholds, forcing them to surrender or die by starvation. The Romans also suffered considerable losses.

Several Roman legions were mobilized throughout the territory of Israel: Legio X Fretensis (Judea), Legio II Traiana Fortis (Alexandria), Legio VI Ferrata (Caesarea Maritima), Legio III Gallica (Syria), Legio III Cyrenaica (Arabia Romana), Legio XXII Deiotariana (Alexandria), Legio X Gemina (Pannonia, region of the Danube, present-day Austria), Legio XV Apollinaris (Turkey), Legio V Macedonica (Macedonia, Moesia and Dacia), Legio XI Claudia (in Lower Moesia, in the Balkans). Cohorts from Legio XII Fulminata (Turkey) and Legio IV Flavia Felix (Upper Moesia) are also mentioned. Legio XXII Deiotariana and Legio XV Apollinaris had many soldiers killed.

Bar Kokhba was killed in 135 CE by the Romans in his stronghold in Betar (Biblical Hebrew: בֵּיתָר, Bēttar, a fortified city in the Judean Mountains, 9 km (6 Roman miles) southwest of Jerusalem; present-day Battir, West Bank). The siege force there is said to have numbered 10–12,000 soldiers. A stone inscription in Latin characters discovered near the city shows that the V Macedonian Legion and the XI Claudian Legion participated in the siege. They also killed around 580,000 Jewish civilians on August 4th, 135 CE, the 9th day of Av.

In 1952 and 1960-61, several letters from Bar Kokhba to his lieutenants were discovered in the Judean Desert. It was a long and bloody war with many battles and more than two years of duration, and with victory for Rome.

The Romans enslaved and butchered many Jews of Judea and many of them were banned. Cassius Dio says that about 50 rebel hideouts were located and eliminated, 985 Jewish villages were destroyed in the campaign, and 580,000 Jews were killed by the sword (in addition to those who died of starvation). The slaves were brought to Rome; they were sold in slave markets, and the most unable to work were taken to the arenas, being killed by gladiators or wild animals. Lucius Cassius Claudius Dios (known as Cassius Dios or Dio Cassius) was a notable Roman historian of the 2nd-3rd century CE and public servant. He wrote about eighty books in twenty-two years, showing the history of Rome.

After the end of the revolt, most of the remaining Jews lived outside Israel, especially in Babylon, Galilee and the Golan Heights. Although the Diaspora has begun in the sixth century BCE, after the Babylonian exile, and especially after 70 CE with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, this war definitely eliminated any possibility of revival of a Judaism centered in the Temple of Jerusalem and in the line of Levitical priests. Judaism became an expression merely religious and cultural, no longer political, a situation that would perpetuate until the rise of Zionism in the 19th century. The demographic devastation was so great that it took several years to repopulate Judea.

The region of Palestine was ruled by several empires in the following centuries, such as the Byzantine Empire, the Muslim Caliphates, the Khwarezmian Tatars, the Ottoman Empire, and became a British protectorate after World War I. Finally, on May 14th, 1948, the State of Israel was founded. However, it was not until 1967, after the Six-Day War, that Israel occupied East Jerusalem and asserted sovereignty over the entire city of Jerusalem, reestablishing its jurisdiction over the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, where a square (Western Wall Plaza) is located today.

• THE FIRST CRUSADE

The Crusades in the Holy Land (1095–1272) are traditionally counted as nine; the 1st from 1096-1099 and the 9th from 1271-1272. The term ‘Crusade’ was not known at that time. Other expressions were used, including ‘pilgrimage’ and ‘holy war.’ The term Crusade arose because its participants considered themselves soldiers of Christ; hence the cross on their clothes. In addition to ‘holy wars’, the Crusades were also a pilgrimage, a form of the fulfilment of some vow, or a way of asking for some grace, and were considered a penance for many knights and even ordinary citizens who engaged in this movement.

THE CRUSADES

- First Crusade (1096-1099) – Jerusalem was taken during the First Crusade in 1099.
- Second Crusade (1147-1149)
- Third Crusade (1189-1192)
- Fourth Crusade (1202-1204)
- Fifth Crusade (1217-1221) – It was decided that to conquer Jerusalem it was necessary to conquer Egypt first, since it controlled that territory. Saint Francis of Assisi, in 1219, during the Fifth Crusade, went to Egypt, met with the Ayyubid sultan Al-Kamil (al-Malik al-Kamil Naser ad-Din Abu al-Ma’ali Muhammad; Reign: 1218 –1238), of the Ayyubid sultanate, which lasted from 1171 to 1250 and was the founding dynasty of the medieval sultanate of Egypt; this sultanate was succeeded by the Mamluk Sultanate of Cairo. Camil listened to him and allowed Francis to preach to the Muslim people. Francis’

attempt was to secure, without war, some areas of Jerusalem of interest to Christians, such as the Holy Sepulcher, for example. He couldn't stop the war, but he made a friend and showed that with Christ peace is possible.

- Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)
- Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)
- Eighth Crusade (1270)
- Ninth Crusade (1271-1272)



Most of the crusaders came from the territories of the former Holy Roman Empire (888-1806; also known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation after 1512), which came to encompass several nations, today known as Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, Switzerland, Austria, part of the Netherlands and Denmark and smaller adjacent territories. Jerusalem had been captured in 637 by Muslims (the Rashidun Caliphate – 632–661) and the Byzantine Empire still persisted in taking possession of Israel and the non-Christian territories in the Levant.

Around the 10th century, the relationship between Byzantines and Islamic countries was not as conflictual, as was the case with Western Christian countries after the Schism of the Catholic Church in 1054. In the 10th century, the Ottoman Turks had already taken over a large part of the Middle East. They conquered Iran, Iraq and the Near East,

including defeating part of the Byzantine Empire and taking Syria and Palestine throughout the Middle East, and of course, Jerusalem.

The First Crusade (1096-1099) officially began on August 15th, 1096 (24th day of Av, AM 4856). This crusade of knights made an agreement with the Byzantine emperor to return the territories conquered by the Turks. They managed to fulfill part of the agreement, until Godfrey of Bouillon, a Frankish military man and a pre-eminent leader of the First Crusade, conquered Jerusalem in 1099. Godfrey of Bouillon was the first Latin sovereign of Jerusalem (1099-1100), but he soon died, and his brother, Baldwin I, also known as Baldwin of Boulogne, was Count of Edessa (1098-1100) and King of Jerusalem (1100-1118). Godfrey of Bouillon avoided the title of king, preferring that of prince (princeps) and Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri, or Advocate of the Holy Sepulcher. But the result was a massacre of local inhabitants, killing 10,000 Jews in its first month and destroying Jewish communities in France and the Rhineland (the Rhine region in western Germany). The territories were divided and the crusaders, whose disagreements with the Byzantines began during the campaign, no longer wanted to return the lands to their Christian brothers in the Byzantine Empire. The feudal system was implemented in the East and with each crusade, the interests of the great and the thirst for conquest increasingly led them to greater corruption and the death of innocent Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Result: total failure in relation to the preaching of the gospel and a great slaughter, from the 1st (1096-1099) to the 9th Crusade (1271-1272), not counting the other unofficial ones that emerged. There was nothing holy about these wars.

• THE JEWS EXPELLED FROM ENGLAND

The expulsion of the Jews from England occurred on **July 18th, 1290 (Tisha B'Av, 9th day of the month of Av, AM 5050)** by Edward I (r. 1272 to 1307). The Edict of Expulsion remained in effect through the Middle Ages, being formally annulled in 1656. One of the sources of income for the crown was English Jews, in addition to wool merchants, for the king handed over the tax profits to Italian bankers. The Jews were the king's personal property and he could tax them as he wished. But around 1280, after much exploitation, they were no longer making much profit for the kingdom of England. Because of their loan dealings, which were prohibited to Christians, they could still be used as political bargain. The fact that they left people in debt to them generated general resentment. In 1275, Edward I had already issued the Statute of Judaism, classifying usury as a crime and encouraging Jews to seek new professions. In 1279, he arrested the heads of several Jewish families, and approximately three hundred were executed. In 1280, he demanded the presence of Jews in the sermons of the Dominican friars in an attempt to convert them, which did not happen. That's why he expelled them from England, through the Edict of Expulsion of 1290 (signed on Tisha B'Av, 9th day of the month of Av). With this act he appropriated Jewish loans and properties, achieving his gain and acquiring political capital to negotiate with parliament. Other European monarchs had already done something similar: Philip II of France expelled all Jews in 1182; John I, Duke of Brittany, in his duchy in 1239; and Louis IX of France, in the late 1240s.

• THE JEWS EXPELLED FROM FRANCE on 22 July 1306 (Av 10, AM 5066)

Philip IV of France (1285-1314), also known as Philip the Fair or Philip I of Navarre (1284-1305) due to his marriage to Joan I, of the kingdom of Navarre (medieval kingdom between Spain and present-day France) was called ironically 'the fair', not because of his beauty, but because of his rigid, autocratic, imposing, and inflexible personality. That's why his enemies and admirers called him 'the marble king' or 'the iron king'. To fund his war campaigns against England, Islamic countries and other nations around him, such as Flanders (today, part of Belgium, Holland and France), Philip IV was forced to resort to several currency devaluations between 1290 and 1309, persecuted the Jews by taking their property and arresting them. On June 21st, 1306 (Tisha B'av 10, AM 5066), the king expelled the Jews from France.

However, it is important to highlight that this king did not just commit bad actions in relation to the Jews, but much worse things, even against Pope Boniface VIII of the Catholic Church and knights who fought in the Crusades, such as the Order of the Templars (the Knights Templar), even accusing them of heresy and burning them at the stake. In 1292 Philip IV confiscated the assets of Lombard bankers and wealthier abbots. With this attitude and those that followed, he generated a controversy with the Catholic church, being threatened with excommunication and interdiction over the kingdom of France, but in the end, his unscrupulous supporters attacked Pope Boniface VIII in his refuge in Anagni, Italy, and he died the following month of mental insanity. The new Pope Clement V was more tolerant towards the king and cooperated with him in suppressing the Templar Order.

THE TEMPLAR ORDER

This order of knights was founded in 1118, shortly after the 1st Crusade (1096-1099), by the French nobleman Hugues de Payens (1070-1136) and existed until 1312, when Pope Clement dissolved the Order, and had the purpose of protecting pilgrims heading to Jerusalem, both from thieves and attacks by Muslims against Christians. It was both a military and a monastic order. A military order (Latin: *militaris ordo*) is a Christian religious society of knights. The Knights Templar, was a Catholic military order, and one of the wealthiest and most popular military orders in Western Christianity. The original military orders were the Knights Templar, the Knights Hospitaller, the Order of Saint James, the Order of Calatrava, and the Teutonic Knights. They arose in the Middle Ages in association with the Crusades, and their members were dedicated to the protection of pilgrims and Christians, as well as the defense of the Crusader states. They are the predecessors of orders of chivalry.

The Order headquartered on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where Solomon's Temple had stood and where the Al-Aqsa Mosque now stands. Its knights took vows of poverty, chastity, devotion and obedience, they wore white mantles with a red cross on the chest. Due to these characteristics, they were also known as the 'Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon' or 'The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon', mainly known as the Knights Templar. Only knights, the brothers of the nobility, had the right to wear the white mantle. The servant brothers or sergeants, usually squires, wore brown or black clothing. This is because of the three main ranks of the order that I will describe later.

Three main ranks were: the noble knights, the non-noble sergeants, and the chaplains. The Templars did not perform knighting ceremonies, so any knight wishing to become a Knight Templar had to be a knight already. They were the most visible branch of the order, and wore the famous white mantles to symbolize their purity and chastity. They

were equipped with three or four horses and one or two squires. Squires were generally not members of the order but lay people who were hired for a set period of time. The sergeants, drawn from non-noble families, were beneath the knights. They were blacksmiths and builders and were in charge of the administration of many properties of the order. In the Crusader States, they fought alongside the knights as light cavalry with a single horse. Several of the order's most senior positions were reserved for sergeants, including the post of Admiral of the Templar fleet. The sergeants wore black or brown. From 1139, chaplains constituted a third Templar class. They were ordained priests who cared for the Templars' spiritual needs. All three classes of brothers wore the order's red cross.



In the image above, a knight and his squire, in black clothes

'Master of the Temple' was the name given to the highest superior in the Order's hierarchy, and who was later called 'grand master', creating confusion between them and Freemasonry, whose first lodge was opened in England in 1717, four centuries after the end of the Templars. The term 'grand master' for the supreme head did not exist in the Order's hierarchy and the Templars themselves used the term 'Master of Cavalry.' However, in late texts the adjectives of 'Master of the Order' or 'Sovereign Master' or

‘General Master’ of the Order appear. The Order was led by only one master at a time, who remained in Jerusalem. Their position was for life, but due to their military position, their tenure could be very short. Almost all of the Grand Masters died in office, and several died during military campaigns. He oversaw all of the operations of the order, including both the military operations in the Holy Land and Eastern Europe and the Templars’ financial and business dealings in Western Europe. Some of them also served as battlefield commanders. The last Grand Master was Jacques de Molay, burned at the stake in Paris in 18th March, 1314 by order of King Philip IV.



Jacques de Molay

The purpose of the Order of the Temple was the protection of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. This pilgrimage was one of the three most important acts of Christianity in the Middle Ages. It lasted several years, for the pilgrims had to travel almost twelve thousand kilometers round trip, as well as on a boat to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The ships left twice a year, in spring and autumn. Normally, pilgrims disembarked in Acre, known locally as Akko or Akka, also called Ptolomais (in the time of the Seleucids and Romans), and at that time of the Crusades, it was officially known as Saint-Jehan-d'Acre (Modern French: Saint-Jean-d'Acre), after the Knights Hospitaller who had their headquarters there and whose patron saint was Saint John the Baptist. In the time of the

Crusaders this city was an ancient fortress and was part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Then, the pilgrims walked to the holy places. As a people of arms, the Templars secured the roads, especially that from Jaffa to Jerusalem and that from Jerusalem to the River Jordan. They also guarded certain holy places: Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Mount of Olives, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Jordan River, Mount Calvary, and the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

Bernard de Clairvaux and founder Hugues de Payens devised a code of conduct for the Order, known today as the Latin Rule and it had 72 clauses, that guided the knights' way of life, including the types of garments they should wear and how many horses they could have. Knights were to take their meals in silence, eat meat no more than three times a week, and not have physical contact of any kind with women. As the order grew, more guidelines were added.

There were many types of crosses for the Templars. Whatever its shape, it indicated the Templars were Christians and the red color recalled the blood shed by Christ, therefore, a symbol of martyrdom, and to die in combat was considered a great honor that assured a place in heaven. Not all Templars participated in a crusade. It seems that the red cross with the wider ends ('Croix pattée' or 'Croix rouge') was only granted late to the Templars by Pope Eugene III, in 1147. Other documents say that the Templars were already using the red cross in 1139. It was, therefore, under the control of Robert de Craon, the Second Master of the Order, that the "Croix rouge" (the red cross) officially became a badge of the Templars. There was a cardinal rule that the warriors of the order should never surrender unless the Templar flag had fallen, and only after all flags had fallen were they allowed to leave the battlefield. This rule, along with their reputation for courage, excellent training, and heavy armament, made the Templars one of the most feared combat forces in medieval times.



Templar Cross

The Order, started with around nine knights, had few financial resources and depended on donations to survive. But this poverty did not last long. In 1129 the Order was officially endorsed by the Church, the Templars became a favored charity throughout

Christendom, receiving money, land, businesses and noble children from families who were eager to help in the fight in the Holy Land. In 1139 Pope Innocent II exempted the Order from obedience to local laws, they were not required to pay any taxes and were exempt from all authority except that of the Pope.

The Templar Order, although its members swore to individual poverty, was given control of wealth beyond direct donations from the faithful of Christendom. A noble who was interested in participating in the Crusades could place all of his assets under Templar management while he was away.

Thus, they lived on the donations from the people, the church and the properties of Christian kings that were given to them (Portugal, for example), and the Templars planted wheat, barley and raised animals there, and sold wheat, barley, wool of lamb, beef and cheese made with milk from animals raised on these properties. The sergeants of the order even developed a system of loans, credit and deposits of wealth, like today's banks. Therefore, in the centuries that followed their foundation they accumulated great wealth and were answerable only to the Pope.

Little by little, however, the Christian fervor of the Templar Order cooled due to the admission of people who did not meet the pure criteria that they followed at the beginning (poverty, chastity, devotion and obedience). Misuse of money was a problem among some. Also because they frequently disagreed with the other two Christian military orders, the Knights Hospitaller and the Teutonic Knights, and decades of internal disputes weakened their Christian, political and military position.

In 1244, the Khwarazmian Tatars recaptured Jerusalem and the city did not return to Western control until 1917, when the British captured it from the Ottoman Turks. The Khwarazmian Tatars were a Sunni Muslim dynasty (orthodox Islam) of Persian influence formed by Turkmen of Mamluk origin. They dominated Greater Iran during the Middle Ages, from 1077 to 1231. After the capture of Acre (the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem), in the northwest of the Holy Land, by Muslims in 1291, the Templars established themselves in the Kingdom of Cyprus, a Christian kingdom formed by the Crusaders since the 3rd Crusade (1189-1192), but in 1306 they supported a coup on the island, which forced King Henry II of Cyprus to abdicate his throne in favor of his brother, Amalric of Tyre. Having regained his throne, in 1310 they ended up being expelled by King Henry II, who burned the convent in which the knights had established themselves. Then the Crusaders lost their last foothold in the Holy Land; support for the organization began to decrease. The Templars, however, never ceased to be a part of everyday life in Christendom.

One of their legacies are architectural elements of Templar buildings, which include the use of the image of 'two knights on a single horse' and round buildings designed to resemble the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

The word 'seal' comes from the Latin 'sigillum' which means 'mark.' It is a personal seal that authenticates an act and attests to a signature. There are about twenty known Templar seals. They belonged to masters, high dignitaries, commanders or knights of the 13th century order. Their diameters vary between 1.5-5 cm. The best-known Templar seal is that of the masters of the order 'sigillum militum xristi' (or 'sigillum militvm Xpisti', seal of the militia of Christ), which depicts two armed knights riding the same horse. There is no established consensus on the symbolism of the two riders on one horse. The most publicized idea was to promote the ideal of poverty, but this leaves doubts, since the order provided at least two or three horses to each of its knights. The historian Georges Bordonove expresses a hypothesis that may be based on a duality, using as a basis the document by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 – French abbot responsible for the reform of the Cistercian Order. Cistercian refers to a restored Benedictine monastic enclosure).

He wrote: “monk, but soldier; the spiritual and the temporal riding the same mount, fighting the same fight, but with different means.” French historian Alain Demurger said the seal would symbolize common life, unity and dedication. Alain Demurger is one of the leading experts on the history of the Knights Templar and the Crusades.



Photo: Patricioros1 – wikipedia.org

In the images above: The emblem of the Military Order of Templars and a ring with its seal. Its emblem was two knights mounted on a single horse.

There have been speculation about what relics the Templars may have found there. The Templars were charged of idolatry and with worshipping either a figure known as Baphomet or a mummified severed head they recovered, among other artefacts, at their original headquarters on the Temple Mount. Some hypothesize that this head was that of John the Baptist, among other things. But there is no convincing evidence. As for the accusation of worshipping Baphomet, it is a completely false accusation, since his image

was created much later by the Frenchman Éliphas Lévi (1810-1875), considered one of the greatest occultists of the 19th century.

One legendary object that may have some connection to the Templars is the Shroud of Turin (since relics from Christ's time were so in vogue at the time). In 1988, a carbon dating analysis concluded that the shroud was made between 1260 and 1390, a period that includes the last half century of the Templars' existence. However, discussions remain about its dating.

Initiation, known as Reception into the Order, was a profound commitment and involved a solemn ceremony. Outsiders were forbidden to attend the ceremony, which aroused the suspicions of medieval inquisitors during the later trials. New members willingly divested themselves from their wealth and goods and gave them to the order, and take vows of poverty, chastity, piety and obedience. Most members of military orders were laymen who took these religious vows, and joined the Order for life, although some were allowed to join for a set period. Sometimes a married man was allowed to join if he had his wife's permission, but he was not allowed to wear the white mantle. As I said before the Templars did not perform knighting ceremonies, so any knight wishing to become a Knight Templar had to be a knight already. The ceremony was probably about confirming the religious vows made with the Order, as the friars and nuns did, when they renounced the world to enter the monastic life. As for this religious ceremony, it is not known exactly what it is due to the destruction of the Templars' central archive in 1571 by the Ottomans, which was on the Island of Cyprus. Therefore, many legends were created around them. The Templars were associated with secret societies or alchemical or witchcraft practices due to the legend that they were almost a secret order, to which no one outside had access, but the truth is different; They opened their churches and places of prayer to local residents where they settled and welcomed pilgrims into their homes and convents. The Chinon Parchment (I will talk about it later) is not convincing proof regarding these heretical and obscene practices.

Philip IV of France also resorted to loans from the Templars to finance his projects and ended up influencing Pope Clement V to destroy them and confiscate their assets. Then, he accused them of apostasy, idolatry, heresy, immorality, sodomy, financial corruption, fraud and several other crimes. On Friday, October 13th, 1307, hundreds of Knights Templar across France were arrested and tortured to confess their heresy, as there were rumors about the Templars' secret initiation ceremony as worshipers of pagan idols. Many of the accused confessed these heretical practices under torture, including that they had spat on the cross. The Templar leaders were burned at the stake. Between October 19th and November 24th, 1307, 138 Templar prisoners were interrogated in Paris, but the Pope was opposed to the methods used by the king to make them confess their heresy and instituted his own investigation among 573 knights, however, without proving whether they were really guilty. It was a way of not going against the principles of the Church and not opposing the king. Thus, the Templar Order was extinguished on March 22nd, 1312 by Clement V. In 18th March 1314, the last Templar leader, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake in Paris, according to legendary historical accounts asking God for justice and cursing the Pope and the king. True or not, Pope Clement V died just a month after Jacques, and King Philip died in a hunting accident before the end of the year 1314.

The Roman Catholic Church today admits that the persecution of the Knights Templar was unjust; that there was no heresy with the Order or its Rule. Pope Clement came under pressure from King Philip IV, but absolved them of all heresy in 1308 before formally dissolving the Order in 1312.

The original Chinon parchment was found in 2001 by the Italian historian and paleographer Barbara Frale in the Vatican Apostolic Archives and published in 2007 with

all the documents relating to the trial of the Templars by the Pope. The Chinon parchment is a historical document that would tend to prove that Pope Clement V secretly absolved the last Grand Master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, and the other officers of the Order of the Temple, of the sins for which the Inquisition had accused them. Chinon is the French city where Jacques de Molay and the other Knights Templar were interrogated. This 'evidence' was obtained through torture-induced confessions, contrary to what appears to have been written there. Based on analysis of the parchment text and other materials from the Templar trials, Barbara Frale has suggested that these acts were intended to simulate the type of humiliation and torture that a crusader might be subjected to if captured by the Saracens. According to this line of reasoning, they were taught to commit apostasy only with their minds and not with their hearts. She also proposed some theories about the Templars' secret initiation practices; in fact absurd, from my point of view (I won't even mention it here) and totally incompatible with the purpose for which the Order was created. Some suggest that the candidate would have to renounce Christ and the cross, but Gordon Napier thinks that the practice of denying the cross was training for what the new knights might face later if they were taken prisoner by Saracens. As for the accusations of contempt for the Holy Mass and denial of the sacraments, there is no controversy. The Templar priests did not mutilate the words of consecration in the mass, and this evidence is given in the Cypriot process by ecclesiastics who had long dwelt with them in the East.

As the Order had many members, only part of the knights were imprisoned (the French), for those of other nationalities fled and took refuge in other countries. According to some historians, some of them went to Scotland, Switzerland, Portugal and even more distant nations on ships, even changing their names in the countries they went to, thus avoiding persecution from the king and the Church. The fact that they went to Scotland (excommunicated at the time) makes some scholars suggest that Freemasonry originated from those who took refuge there and, therefore, one of the Masonic orders today is called the Order of the Knights Templar, an organization philanthropic international restricted only to Christian Freemasons. But in fact there is no clear historical link between the Knights Templar, which was dismantled in the 14th century, and any of these other organizations, from which the Freemasons emerged publicly in the 18th century. Freemasons simply appropriated these symbols, as they do with many others. Four centuries make a lot of difference.

In short: what was created in the past, most likely, differs from what is today in its objectives and principles.

• THE JEWS EXPELLED FROM SPAIN ON 31 JULY 1492 (Av 7)

The Alhambra Decree, also known as the Edict of Granada and the Edict of Expulsion, promulgated on March 31st, 1492 by kings Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, of Spain, ordered all Jews to leave Spanish territory until July 31st 1492 (Av 7, AM 5252), during the terrible period of the Spanish Inquisition. The main objective was to prevent the conversion of Spain's Jews to Catholicism and ensure that they did not return to Judaism. Although Judaism was not considered a heresy, professing Christianity while engaging in Jewish practices was heretical. More than half of Spain's Jews had converted to Catholicism because of religious persecution and mass persecution of them in 1391. Due to continued attacks, about 50,000 others converted by 1415. A further number of those who remained chose to convert to avoid expulsion. Now, around 200,000 Jews converted to Catholicism and between 40,000 and 100,000 were expelled and

dispersed throughout many nations: Portugal, Italy, North Africa, Greece and the countries under Ottoman rule (other parts of the Balkans, in what is now Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia). Having to sell their land, their houses and their libraries, even at very low prices, they had to leave with the money they had, under penalty of execution if they did not leave the country within the stipulated period. The result is that much of the Jewish community's wealth remained in Spain. The king of Portugal, Manuel I, called a truce in the 40-year inquisition, and soon after, the Jews who were there headed to the Netherlands.

In fact, they had many legal restrictions in almost every country they emigrated to. Some Jews settled in France, where they had their emancipation in September 1791. This was achieved later in other nations: in Greece in 1830, in Great Britain in 1858, in Italy in 1870, in Germany in 1871 and in Norway in 1891. The term 'emancipation' means the granting of legal rights equal to those of other citizens of a country, that is, the same rights of citizenship, where to live and in the profession of one's choice. But despite this civil equality, European Jews continued to suffer from anti-Semitism and social discrimination. In Spain, Sephardic Jews (or Sephardi Jews) from the Diaspora regained the right to Spanish citizenship in 1924. In 2014, Spanish law approved dual citizenship for descendants of Jews who were expelled from Spain due to the Alhambra Decree, being able to retain their current citizenship and the Spanish too.

INQUISITION

The term Medieval Inquisition covers the courts of the 12th century (beginning in France in 1184, the Episcopal Inquisition; then the Roman Inquisition in 1230, under Papal control) to the mid-15th century (late Middle Ages and early Renaissance). But it was expanded in response to the Protestant Reformation (started with Luther's 95 theses in 1517) and the Catholic Counter-Reformation (from 1545), extending to other European countries besides Italy (Rome), resulting in the Spanish Inquisition (1478 – by Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile, to maintain Catholic orthodoxy in their kingdoms) and Portuguese Inquisition (known as the Tribunal of Holy Office, from May 5th, 1536 to March, 31st 1821, which judged in particular the Jewish converts to Christianity, who brought much of their old Judaizing practices into the new religion). In short: approximately 637 years, almost seven centuries of Inquisition.

• WORLD WAR I

Another event that occurred on Tisha B'Av was the World War I – from July 28th, 1914 (equivalent to 9 Av, AM 5674) to November 11th, 1918. It occurred between the Allies (United Kingdom, France and Russia) and the Central Empires (Germany and Austria-Hungary) of Europe. Italy fought for the Allies. Numerous factors caused the First World War: economic rivalry, resentment over past events and nationalist issues. The war was triggered when Germany declared war against Russia due to the assassination of the Archduke of Austria (Franz Ferdinand Carl Ludwig Joseph Maria), the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife Sophie Marie Josephine Albina Gräfin Chotek von Chotkow und Wognin, Duchess of Hohenberg, by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip, in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Kingdom of Serbia. **Germany entered World War I on 28th July, 1914 (Av 9th–10th).**

The German Empire is sometimes referred to as Imperial Germany or the Second Reich, and approximately 100,000 German Jews fought for it, 12,000 of whom lost their

lives in the war. Some Germans accused the Jews of cowardice, and even of being the guilty for Germany's defeat, which they called a "stab in the back." Thus, Jews began to be discriminated against and persecuted, even after the conflict ended. Many historians claim that World War II was the prolonged conclusion of World War I, with the emergence of Nazism and the Holocaust.

World War I was one of the deadliest wars in history, and the result was 9 million soldiers dead, 23 million soldiers wounded, and 5 million civilians dead due to military action, hunger and disease. Genocide cause death of millions more. The war also contributed to the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. The Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires were dissolved, leading to the creation of new independent states, including Poland, Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The great powers were unable to manage the post-war instability, and this contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

• WORLD WAR II

In World War II (September 1st, 1939 – August 15th, 1945), on August 2nd, 1941 (**Tisha B'Av**, 9th Av, AM 5701), SS commander Heinrich Himmler formally received the approval of the Nazi Party to the beginning of the Holocaust, known as 'The Final Solution'. The SS was considered the elite unit of the Nazi Party. It is the abbreviation for Schutzstaffel ('Protection Troop'), a paramilitary organization linked to the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler. On July 23rd, 1942 (**Tisha B'Av**, 9th Av, AM 5702) the mass expulsion of the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto began to the Treblinka transit camp and to the concentration camps in Minsk, Majdanek or Auschwitz (also in Poland). By September 21st, 1942, around 300,000 people had been mobilized. Still on July 23rd, 1942, the Treblinka gas chambers began operating, starting the Holocaust. They were in operation between July 1942 and October 1943, and around 700,000 to 1 million people were exterminated in Treblinka. Not only Jews (in Nazi racial theory, a Semitic people of Levantine origins), but many people across Europe were killed, those considered by Hitler as 'unworthy of life': Slavs (mainly ethnic Poles, Serbs, Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, etc.), Soviet prisoners of war, the physically disabled and mentally ill, homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Romani (an Indo-Aryan people originating from the Indian subcontinent, referred disparagingly as 'Gypsies'). It is worth mentioning that Heinrich Himmler committed suicide with a cyanide capsule on May 23rd, 1945 in Luxembourg, Germany, after being captured by British forces.

World War II was the deadliest conflict in human history (more than the First World War), resulting in between 50 and 70 million deaths or more, and marked by countless attacks against civilians, including the Holocaust and the only time nuclear weapons were used in combat.

It is related to totalitarianism in Europe (Nazism and Fascism) and had as its direct cause the expansionism of Nazi Germany throughout the 1930s. Having lost the First World War, Germany suffered a serious economic crisis in the 1920s and felt humiliated. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 was a peace treaty signed by European powers that officially ended the First World War, but the Nazis (supporters of 'far-right radicalism', or 'right-wing extremism') did not accept its terms; they favored the militarization of Germany and held openly anti-Semitic views. In 1933 the Nazis took power in Germany, beginning the construction of a totalitarian government. With German military forces reorganized and strong, the Nazis sought their territorial expansion.

On September 1st, 1939, Hitler ordered an attack on Poland, which was the starting point of the war. Days later, the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany. It was the most comprehensive war in history, with more than 100 million soldiers mobilized. The two opposing military alliances were: the Allies (in the beginning, France, Poland and the United Kingdom and their dependent states, such as British India) and the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan).

Little by little, other countries became involved in the conflict, taking the side of the Allies. And on September 17th, 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. On June 22nd, 1941, the war worsened with a violent attack by the Nazis on Russia, formerly Soviet Union. That same year, China officially joined the Allies. From a neutral country at the time, USA entered the war following the surprise military attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service (on the morning of December 7th, 1941) on Pearl Harbor, an American naval base in Honolulu, in the Territory of Hawaii. The Japanese also attacked Britain in December 1941. Brazil was the only South American country to send troops to fight on the European front in World War II. Anschluss is a word from the German language that means 'joining' or 'connection.' It is used in History to refer to the political-military annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938. Austria became a neutral state, not aligned with any political bloc.

Some government ideologies influenced World War II, especially Nazism and Fascism.

NAZISM

Nazism, officially called National Socialism, is a form of far-right totalitarianism, which despises liberal democracy, the parliamentary system, communism and Marxism. This totalitarian, one-party regime established by Hitler became known as the Third Reich. He sought the supposed purity and strength of a superior race, the 'Aryan race', where 'superior' people have the right to dominate other individuals and that society should purge supposedly 'inferior', 'degenerate' elements, and 'anti-social groups', which included: Jews (in Nazi racial theory, a Semitic people of Levantine origins), homosexuals, Romani (an Indo-Aryan people originating from the Indian subcontinent, referred disparagingly as 'Gypsies'), blacks, physically and mentally disabled people, Jehovah's Witnesses, Freemasons and political opponents.

As I said, Nazism despised Marxism, which is a method of studying societies that encompasses the social, economic and political organizations of each era and was inspired by the German social philosopher Karl Marx and the German revolutionary Friedrich Engels between 1840 and 1850. Its ideology radically criticizes capitalism and proclaims the emancipation of humanity in an equalitarian and classless society. As a result of socialism, a communist phase of social development would emerge, a stateless and classless society, built on common property and in the beginning everyone would work and produce according to their ability and supply themselves according to their needs.

At its peak, the German state controlled by the Nazi or Nazi party systematically murdered around six million Jews (mostly Ashkenazi, that is, those who lived in Central Europe), two million Poles and four million people from other target groups, considered by Hitler as 'unworthy of life', such as Slavs (mainly ethnic Poles, Serbs, Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, etc.), the disabled and mentally ill, Soviet prisoners of war, Romani (an Indo-Aryan people originating from the Indian subcontinent, referred disparagingly as 'Gypsies'), homosexuals, Freemasons, and Jehovah's Witnesses,' what

became known as the Holocaust. Around 12 million, most of whom were Eastern Europeans, were employed in the German war economy as forced laborers.

On April 30th, 1945, Adolf Hitler and his lover Eva Braun, whom he had married 40 hours before, committed suicide to avoid being captured by the Red Army (Army and Air Force of the Soviet Union). Their bodies were burned and buried. A week later Germany formally surrendered.

FASCISM

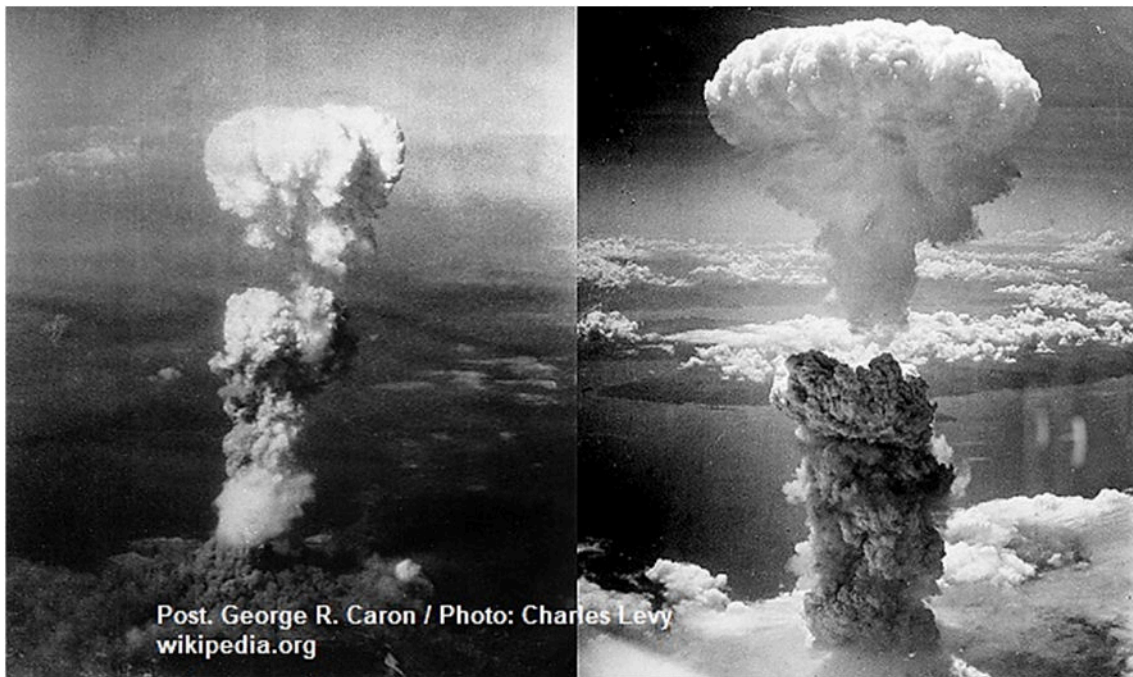
Fascism, adopted by Benito Mussolini in Italy, has somewhat similar characteristics. In Fascism there is the dictatorial power of the State, whose political ideology is ultranationalist and authoritarian, repressing all opposition through force and tying society and the economy to it in a strong way, where individual interests are subordinated to the interests of the nation, in submission to the dictator. It also despises democracy and political and economic freedom, as well as supporting the belief in a natural social hierarchy and the dominance of elites. As early as November 1st, 1936, Benito Mussolini had declared that all other European countries would start to run on the Rome-Berlin axis, thus creating the term 'Axis', which meant a connection or political alliance between Italy and Germany. Many believe that the term 'Axis' was created a little earlier by Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös, who wanted to form an alliance between Hungary, Germany and Italy. But his unexpected death in 1936 ended Hungary's participation in an axis with Italians and Germans, for his successor, Kálmán Darányi, did not have fascist ideals. Benito Mussolini was killed on April 28th, 1945 by guerrillas of the Italian Resistance, against Nazism and Fascism.

Returning to World War II:

Axis forces made use of biological and chemical weapons. The Italians used mustard gas during the conquest of Abyssinia, while the Imperial Japanese Army used various types of biological weapons during the invasion and occupation of China and in early conflicts against the Soviets. The Germans and Japanese tested these weapons on civilians and prisoners of war. Human beings were used as guinea pigs in these experiments.

In the final moments of the Pacific campaign, Japanese airplane pilots from the Imperial Japanese Navy, loaded with explosives missiles, carried out suicide attacks against Allied ships. They were known as "Shinpū Tokubetsu Kōgekitai", namely, "Divine Wind Special Attack Unit", and called by the Americans by the term "Kamikaze", from "kami" = god, divinity or spirit; and "kaze" = wind, therefore: "divine wind", alluding to the storms that saved Japan from the Mongolian attack in 1247 and 1281; in other words, the suicide pilots would once again save Japan from "new Mongols" (the Americans).

The UK, US and Soviet Union met in August 1945 and drafted the Potsdam Agreement, demanding Japanese surrender. As Japan chose to ignore these terms, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. On August 15th, 1945, Japan surrendered, with the surrender documents finally signed on board the deck of the American battleship USS Missouri on September 2nd, 1945, which ended the war.



In the images above we see mushroom clouds over Hiroshima (left) and Nagasaki (right), after the dropping of the atomic bombs, on August 6th and 9th, 1945, respectively.

It ended with Allied victory, significantly altering the political alignment and social structure of the world. Post-war, a council was formed by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and leaders Chiang Kai-shek (China), Winston Churchill (England) and Joseph Stalin (Russia; of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or Gensek), as a guarantee for world peace. This council was called the 'Big Four.'

The United Nations was established to encourage global cooperation and prevent future conflicts. However, the Soviet Union and the United States emerged as separate superpowers, which was called 'Cold War' between the Western and Eastern blocs for forty-six years (1945–1991). During this period, decolonization occurred in Asia and Africa, while Western Europe began a movement of economic recovery and political integration. The United States emerged far richer than any other nation. Others took a while to recover.

The Cold War began an arms race and a race to conquer space. The first space satellite launched by Russia was Sputnik 1, which was in Earth orbit for 3 months. The first spacecraft into space was Vostok 1, the first manned flight by astronaut Yuri Gagarin.

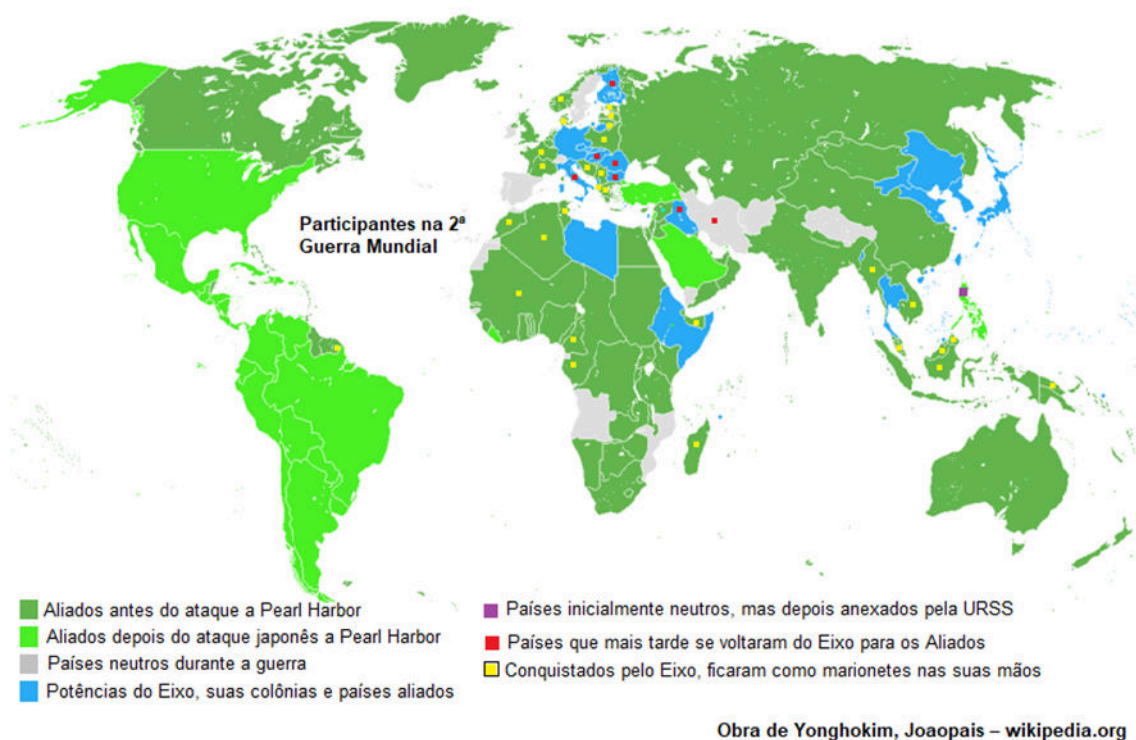
As for Israel and Palestine, with the defeat of the Ottoman Turks in the First World War, Palestine was placed under British control in 1922. When the UN was created in 1945, Palestine was still a territory administered by Great Britain. After the end of Second World War, the West found itself with a moral duty to respond to the ancient Zionist demand for the creation of a Jewish State to compensate them for the atrocities committed by Hitler's Nazi regime. A committee led by the United States and the Soviet Union sent a project for the division of Palestine to the United Nations, with 55% (5,500 acres) of the area given to Israel (the Jewish State) and 45% (4,500 acres) to the Palestinian State. The Arab League (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) rejected the proposal. Because of violence between Jews and Palestinians, in February 1947 England took the issue to the UN. That year, Palestine already had a population of 1 million and 300 thousand Palestinians and 600 thousand Jews.

The long Arab-Israeli conflict began at the end of the 19th century following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1917. The Arab-Israeli war of 1948 (also known as the First Arab–Israeli War) began after the British withdrawal and with the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14th, 1948. The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel was signed at 4 pm on May 14th, 1948 (corresponding to Iyar 5, 5708 in the Jewish calendar), in the city of Tel-Aviv, on the eve of Shabbat. This ‘War of Independence’ ended after several ceasefire agreements between Israelis and Arabs, signed between February and July 1949. The war was declared by the Arab States, which had rejected the UN Plan for the Partition of Palestine. The remaining territory was occupied by Jordan, which annexed the West Bank, and Egypt, which occupied the Gaza Strip.

In 1967 the Six Day War took place, an Arab-Israeli war involving Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, where Israel occupied Eastern Jerusalem and claimed sovereignty over the entire city. Access to the Jewish holy sites was restored and the Moroccan Quarter or Mughrabi Quarter west of the Temple Mount was vacated to make way for a square (Western Wall Plaza), where there is the Wailing Wall. The Temple Mount remained under Islamic jurisdiction.

After the 1973 war (Yom Kippur War), when the ceasefire came into effect, Israel lost territory in the eastern part of the Suez Canal to Egypt, but gained territory west of the canal and in the Golan Heights. And the conflict in that area continues today.

The map below shows the countries participating in the Second World War.



• OTHER MORE RECENT EVENTS OCURRED ON TISHA B'AV WITH THE JEWS

• The AMIA bombing on the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, killed 85 and injured 300 on 18th July 1994 (10 Av, AM 5754). AMIA = Asociación Mutual

Israelita Argentina (AMIA; transl.: ‘Argentine Israelite Mutual Association’), a Jewish Community Center.

- The 2005 Israeli disengagement from Gaza.

“For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isa. 57: 15).

Source of research for texts and images:

- Wikipedia.org (Pt/En/Fr)
- Crystalinks.com

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