

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted August 14, 2008, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

THE HAPPIEST DAY IN THE CALENDAR: THE FIFTEENTH OF AV **© Judith Z. Abrams, 2008**

Mishnah Taanit 4:7 teaches that the happiest day in the Jewish calendar is the fifteenth of Av. It was like an ancient Sadie Hawkins Day, where girls and guys would dance in the vineyards and, get together, so to speak.

The Yerushalmi offers the Toraitic basis for the holiday, as it does for all the fast days:

On the eve of each ninth of Av in the wilderness, Moses would announce through the entire camp, "Go out for the grave digging! Go out for the grave digging!" They would go out and dig grave for themselves and go to sleep. In the morning they would get up and find themselves 15,000 fewer. But in the last year they did so and arose and found themselves whole, i.e., no one had died.

They said: Is it possible we have made an error in counting?

So they did the same on the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th of Av. When the full moon came they said: It would appear that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has annulled the evil decree against us.

They arose and declared that day a holiday. (Y. Taanit 4:7)

Discussion Questions:

1. How is the Fifteenth of Av observed in your community? Can you think of ways you could creatively plan to observe it next year?
2. How is finding a mate like learning you will live when you thought you would die?
3. What would it be like digging your own grave?