



EMET Matters

Schools for Children vs. Pens for Flocks: A Lesson from Parashat Matot by Rabbi Reuven Kigel

In one of this week's Parshiot, Matot, we have many incidents that may leave us in a state of wonderment. One such incident is the request that the tribes of Reuven and Gad made of Moshe Rabbeinu. They wanted to stay in chutz la'aretz east of the Jordan and not enter into Eretz Yisrael, the promised land!! Isn't this what the Jewish people just got in trouble for during the incident of the spies? How can it be that these two tribes are making the same request?

Moshe Rabbeinu asks them this very question. They proceed to explain that they will fight and give up their life to help conquer the land. It's just that they have abundant flocks and want to settle outside of the land and build pens for their animals and cities (schools) for their children. Moshe seems satisfied with the answer. However, in his response to them he reverses the order of their plan: he tells them they can stay and build schools for their children and pens for their flocks. He then also places two families from the tribe of Menashe to live outside of the land of Israel, although they never requested to do so. Our Rabbis tell us that the tribe of Menashe was there to help connect the other two tribes to Hashem and the Torah. It was their role to make sure

the people were focused first on the "schools for the children" and second on the "pens for their flocks."

The lesson from this interaction is important for us today. It is especially pertinent to those of us who are choosing to live outside of the land of Israel when it's possible to live in the land itself. We have to make sure that we are focused on the spiritual "schools" and not the material "flocks," because the pull to the materialistic is always stronger outside of Israel. Most importantly, we have to cling to the "tribe of Menashe" who are amongst us -- our Rabbis and Rebbetzins. This allows us to stay connected and strong no matter where we find ourselves until the coming of Moshiach. May He come speedily in our days.



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Lessons in Halacha *(in accordance with Sefardic custom)*

By Rabbi Binyamin Yuhanan, EMET’s Rabbinic Consultant

Laws of Tisha B’Av based on Yalkut Yosef – Sunday, August 11



Laws of Shabbat Chazon:

- 1. We can eat meat and drink wine on Shabbat.
- 2. We say the blessing over the Havdalah candle in Shul, but not the actual Havdalah.
- 3. The blessing on wine and the actual Havdalah blessing are recited on Sunday night after the fast.
- 4. We do not say a blessing on Besamim (fragrant spices) on Saturday night nor on Sunday night.
- 5. Any person who will not be fasting must say Havdalah as is done every Saturday night.
- 6. However, do not say the blessing for Besamim and don’t smell them.
- 7. On Saturday evening, wear only non-leather shoes, starting 20 minutes after sunset.

Brief Laws of Tisha B’Av:

- 1. No Eating or Drinking from Saturday at sunset until Sunday after nightfall. If one has a headache which causes him much discomfort, one is allowed to swallow Advil or Tylenol without water.
- 2. No leather shoes. But leather belts are fine.
- 3. Not allowed to apply any creams to skin. However, deodorant is permitted, since it is applied in order to mask an odor.
- 4. Not allowed to bathe or shower. Therefore, wash hands in the morning and throughout the day only up to the knuckles. If one’s hands are dirty, one may wash them regularly with soap.
- 5. Not allowed to brush teeth or rinse out mouth Sunday morning, since might swallow some water. Can rinse the mouth with mouthwash.
- 6. Washing face is prohibited. As for the eyes: dry your hands and while they are moist, wipe your eyes. However, if you have mucus buildup in the eyes, use water to wash them.
- 7. Put on Tefillin on Sunday morning, as usual. However, some do it in the afternoon.
- 8. The fast ends Sunday at 8:25 PM. Upon returning home, make Havdalah over wine first, and only then eat. Same rule applies for women.

Detailed Laws of Tisha B’Av:

- The following people do not have to fast:
- 1. Women who gave birth or had a miscarriage in the last 30 days
 - 2. Sick people -- someone who is not capable of going around doing normal day-to-day activities (i.e. they are in bed)
 - 3. Boys under 13 and girls under 12

** This year, Tisha B’Av is postponed from Shabbat to Sunday. This means that the following people do not have to fast in addition to those listed in above:
Women pregnant more than 3 months, nursing women, women who gave birth within 24 months

Laws:

- 1. Not allowed to eat, drink, wash any body part, even hands and face, no ointments or creams, no leather shoes, no marital relations
- 2. A married couple are allowed to pass things to each other directly (if the wife is not Niddah)
- 3. Washing body parts and applying creams are allowed if not for pleasure, for example:
 - Allowed to use hand cream for medical treatment (i.e. if skin is chapped)
 - Allowed to wash hands if they become dirty
- 4. In the morning, only wash hands up to the knuckles (and say the blessing “Al Netilat Yadaim”)
- 5. Allowed to use deodorant
- 6. Better not to brush teeth with toothpaste
 - Allowed to brush with just the toothbrush (no water)
- 7. Sit on the floor until midday (around 1 PM)
 - Can sit on any item as long as it is within a Tefah (8 cm) off the ground
 - An elderly person can sit on an item which is within 3 Tefahim (24 cm) off the ground
- 8. Not allowed to greet anyone with “Shalom”
 - Allowed to say good morning / good afternoon
- 9. Not allowed to learn Torah / read Tehillim
 - Can learn subjects which discuss the destruction of the Temple (or another sad topic)
- 10. Not allowed to engage in pleasurable activities such as taking a walk around the park, etc.
- 11. Better not to smoke cigarettes.
- 12. We wear Tallit and Tefillin as usual for Shaharit. Some wear Tefillin only at Mincha.
- 13. Fast ends 20 minutes after sunset
- 14. After the fast, after Arvit, we say Birkat Halevana (blessing for the new moon)
- 15. Ideally, we should first eat and change to leather shoes before saying Birkat Halevana

After the Fast:

- 1. Allowed to shower, shave, get haircut, do laundry, wear fresh clothes immediately after the fast
- 2. This year we can also eat meat, drink wine, and listen to music immediately after the fast.

To contact Rabbi Yuhanan with halacha questions on any topic, please email BYuhanan@Gmail.com.

Kedusha into their lives, and this Shabbat Hashem gifted us with the ability to just look outside the window, and receive and embrace the holiness. It was literally an awe-inspiring experience to eat Leil Shabbat overlooking the Kotel. At the meal, each girl shared how they came to be learning in Israel. Then we had a shiur with Rabbi Eli Deutsch, with a great Q&A session. The girls were hosted by families in the area for Shabbat lunch. In the afternoon, we were escorted by two chayalim to visit the Zilberman family, who live in the Muslim quarter. The family engaged us with their journey of living there. Mrs. Sara Yoheved Rigler then spoke in our apartment on the topic of “Knowing Oneself.” She brought a surprise speaker with her -- the acclaimed singer, Julia Blum, from California. Julia shared her incredible journey from Broadway to Torah. Then, overlooking the Kotel, Julia, along with one of our students, Daniella Bababekov, who is gifted with a beautiful voice, sang a few songs together. It was an amazing experience. We then had an uplifting Seuda Shlishit and Havdalah by Mrs. Pamela Clayman. We ended Shabbat with a kumzitz on the porch of our apartment. Each girl shared what Shabbat meant to her. It was a beautiful end to an unforgettable Shabbat!

A Few Highlights of the Week:

Monday –We enjoyed a barbecue and an amazing shiur with Mrs. Batya Burd, as she shared her life story. We then headed to the Kotel for the inspirational tunnel tour, which helped everyone gain a great appreciation for the history of the area. We ended the tour by singing, dancing and davening!

Wednesday – We brought a group of 18 students on a tour to Chevron and Me’arat Hamachpeila. Mrs. Basya Korin enthralled the girls with her personal journey to Judaism.

Thursday – We had a lovely excursion to Yam Hamelach!

Sunday – We saw a fascinating 3-D movie at the Kotel and experienced what it was like in the time of the Beit Hamikdash. We then went in the tunnels, and had a kumzitz/goodbye for the girls who were departing.

This was a trip I will never forget, and I can’t wait to share the impressions of our students when they return!



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Diary of a Trip to Israel: Emet Students Experience Higher-Level Learning

Summer vacation took on a higher meaning, when a group of young women from Emet’s Fellowship and Step It Up programs were inspired to expand on their Torah learning in Eretz Yisrael. After an intense semester at college, the students chose to explore their heritage and devote more time to Torah study. Ms. Shira Fendel, Emet’s Women’s Director, traveled to Israel to guide and unite the Emet students, some of whom were learning at Neve in Jerusalem and others who were there on vacation. She spent over a week creating programming to make their experience as memorable and impactful as possible. The following is a glimpse into her “trip diary.”

First Shabbat – We spent the first Shabbat together in the Old City, in an apartment that was literally overlooking the Kotel. On Erev Shabbat, we took a walking tour of the Old City with well-known tour guide Bashie Zilberman, so that the students could appreciate and understand where they would be spending Shabbat. Once we were ready for Shabbat, we had a beautiful musical pre-Shabbat oneg, with famous singer Chaim Dovid, on his rooftop overlooking the Har Habayit. Already in the Shabbat mode, we then went to the Kotel for an amazing Kabbalat Shabbat.

Over Shabbat, we kept discussing the concept that in New York each of the girls are working so hard to bring