

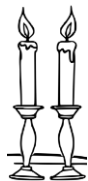
Hebrew date: 22nd Tishrei, 5785

Gregorian date: 23rd – 24th October, 2024

London Chag times: 17:36 – 18:37

Special events: Succot Day 8 in the diaspora / Shemini Atzeret

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Parasha Thinking



- 1) What do you think the Jewish people took with them, when they travelled by foot, to the Beit HaMikdash?
- 2) Imagine you were the farmer. Would you be more likely to transport the crops or sell them and use the money to buy the food when you reach Yerushalayim? (Either answer is acceptable but you must justify your response).
- 3) How does the word, farm, link to Shemini Atzeret?

Shemini Atzeret Torah Reading



Summary

When Jewish people grow crops, a tenth of it must be eaten in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). If transporting that amount of produce is not possible or it is difficult for another reason, the farmer may sell the crops and use the money to buy more food when they reach Yerushalayim. This doesn't take place every year, as during some years, the 10 percent is given to the poor, or to the Kohanim (Priests) or Levi'im (Levites) who work in the Beit HaMikdash (permanent Temple in Yerushalayim).

A farmer had to set aside their firstborn cattle and sheep and these were brought to the Beit HaMikdash and offered as sacrifices to Hashem (G-d). Following the sacrifice, the Kohanim were allowed to eat the meat.

We have a mitzvah (biblical commandment) to give charity to someone who is needy. This charity can be in the form of money, a loan or even a gift. When we reach the Shmitta (Sabbatical) year, which is the final year in the seven year cycle, all loans are cancelled. After six years of work, anyone who is a slave by choice, must be set free.

On Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost) and Succot (Tabernacle), the Jewish people journeyed by foot to the Beit HaMikdash from wherever they lived in Israel. These festivals are known as the Shalosh Regalim – the Three Foot Festivals.

Hashem told the Jewish people that the eighth day, the day after Succot ends, will be the chag (festival) called Shemini Atzeret. On that day, a young, male cow will be offered to Hashem, with a ram and seven lambs. This would be accompanied by a certain amount of flour, oil and wine and will also take place in the Beit HaMikdash.

Discovery

Did you know that one of the names for the Festival of 'Shavuot' is Atzeret?

Did you know that a 12th Century Scholar called the Rambam explained that there are actually eight levels of charity, ranging from giving money but doing so begrudgingly, to teaching someone a skill or giving them a job, so that they can earn their own money?

Did you know that even nowadays, people walk to the Kotel (Wailing Wall), the last remaining wall that surrounded the Beit HaMikdash, in Jerusalem, during Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

Who has done something special for you this week and what did they do? (If they are present, go up to them and say thank you!)

Games



1) Wheat, Wine, Off to Yerushalayim, Take the Crops and Animals and Get There on Time

Children sit in a circle and the first person very slowly says, "Wheat, wine, off to Yerushalayim, take the crops and animals and get there on time." The next person has to say it a little faster. Each time the pace picks up slowly. If someone gets it wrong, they have to step out of the circle, as they are out. The game starts again with the next person in the circle but slowly, back to the original pace. The game continues until there is one player, who can say the whole thing, very fast, three times in a row.

2) Fruit Basket

Link: the farmers brought all their crops to Yerushalayim

One child is 'it' and stands in the middle. Their chair is removed from the circle. The leader goes round and assigns all the remaining children a crop; apple, orange, grape, apple orange grape, etc. The 'it' child calls out one of the fruits, e.g. grapes and all the grape children have to switch seats amongst themselves and the 'it' has to try to sit in one of their chairs. The last child remaining is the new 'it' and calls out a different fruit and whilst they swap, the 'it' tries to sit down. If the 'it' calls fruit basket, then all the children switch seats.

3) The Song Game

Link: The Jewish people had to walk to Yerushalayim

Divide the children into two groups and see how many songs they can come up with that either include the word walk (or walking) or words that are similar (such as march, etc).

Story (One of the children can read this out loud – encourage them to use expression.)



"Do you feel like you're missing out?" asked Yehuda.

"Kinda, yes!" answered Binyamin "but I didn't grow any crops – that's not my job. I'm a teacher at the Jewish school and I don't tend to the field!"

"That makes sense!" said Yehuda, understandingly.

"I still get to walk to Yerushalayim. I still get to be at the Beit HaMikdash, I just don't have any crops to eat there, that I have grown," reasoned Binyamin.

Yehuda thought to himself, 'I wonder if there is anything I can do to help Binyamin?' and meanwhile, Binyamin thought to himself, 'I wonder if there is anything I can do to help Yehuda?'

Binyamin started picking up Yehuda's boxes of crops and put the crops into sacks. Yehuda looked at him and thought to himself, 'wow, that's really kind of him! He has no crops of his own but he's helping me, so I can carry them on my journey – what a mensch (gentleman).' Yehuda reached down to help Binyamin and the two of them filled the sacks, in silence. Not an awkward silence, just a peaceful silence. He turned to Binyamin and said, "Binyamin, you really are a good friend. You have no obligation whatsoever to help me, yet you've given up your own time to pack with me. I am so grateful."

Binyamin turned to his friend and said, "It's the least I could do – it makes me feel like I am involved in the mitzvah of bringing crops to Yerushalayim. Thank you for allowing me to, somehow, be part of the mitzvah."

Later that day, Yehuda was talking to his brother and told him what had happened with Binyamin and mentioned that he wishes he could think of something he could do, to help Binyamin. Yehuda's brother had an idea. "Why don't you mark out a small plot of your land – it could be just 1m² and you could gift it to Binyamin and teach him how to grow his own crops there. It won't be so time consuming for either of you because it's so small. That way, Binyamin will have his own crops to take to Yerushalayim. What do you think?"

With tears of joy in his eyes, Yehuda ran to tell Binyamin about the land he was gifting him and with tears running down his cheeks, Binyamin said, "thank you, thank you, thank you!" over and over and over.

1) How does this story connect to Shemini Atzeret?

2) Do you think that Binyamin would feel that he had to pay Yehuda back in some way, for the land and the lessons in growing crops?

3) Have you ever helped anyone to do a mitzvah?