

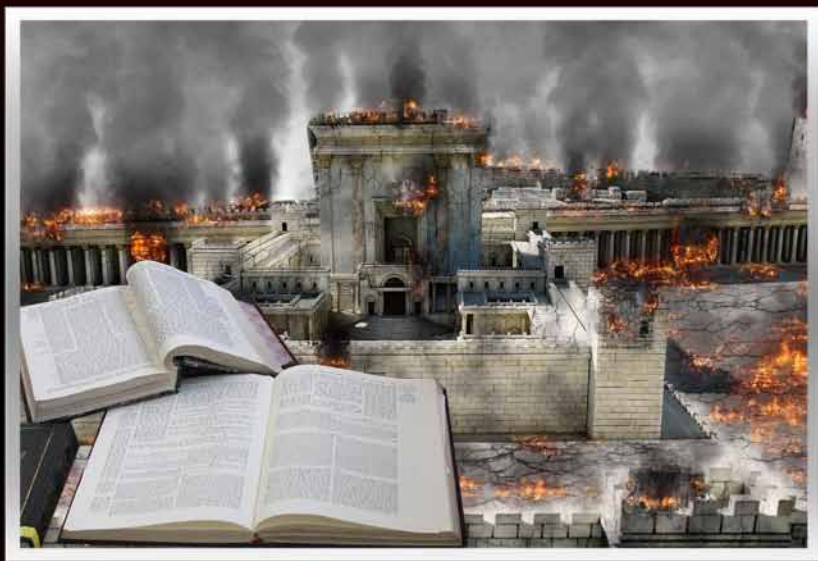
HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Volume 14 Issue 8



{ TOPIC }

Learning Torah on Tishah B'Av



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► Halachically Speaking is a monthly publication compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits, a former *chaver kollel* of *Yeshiva Torah Vodaath* and a *musmach* of *Harav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*. Rabbi Lebovits currently works as the Rabbinical Administrator for the KOF-K Kosher Supervision.

► Each issue reviews a different area of contemporary *halacha* with an emphasis on practical applications of the principles discussed. Significant time is spent ensuring the inclusion of all relevant *shittos* on each topic, as well as the *psak* of *Harav Yisroel Belsky, Shlita* on current issues.

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Learning Torah on Tishah B'Av

Many actions are forbidden on Tishah B'Av, including learning. What is the reason for this? What kind of learning is prohibited? Does this apply to teaching children as well? These and other issues will be discussed below.

The Source

The Gemara¹ mentions that one is not allowed to learn Torah, *Nevi'im*, *Kesuvim*, Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, *Halachos*, and *Aggadah*. This is recorded in halachah as well.²

Reason

There are two reasons given for this restriction. One reason is that Torah gladdens the heart,³ as the *pasuk* says, *Pikudei Hashem misamchei lev*.⁴ The Maharsha⁵ says that this is why children may not learn Torah.⁶ However, the reason for adults is that learning topics not associated with Tishah B'Av takes one's mind off the *aveilus* and focus of the day.⁷

1 *Maseches Ta'anis* 30a.

2 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:1; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 124:5. This applies to women as well (*Rivevos Ephraim* 2:155:14).

3 *Maseches Ta'anis* 30a; *Shulchan Aruch* 554:1; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 124:5; *Chayei Adam* 135:1; *Mishnah Berurah* 553:8. See *Rashi*, *Maseches Ta'anis* 30a, "v'assur."

4 *Tehillim* 19:9. See *Rosh*, *Maseches Ta'anis* 4:34.

5 *Maseches Ta'anis* 30a.

6 See *Biur Halachah* 554, "bitelim," which says the joy is for the teacher who is teaching the students, not the joy of the students' learning.

7 See *Aruch Hashulchan* 1.

איננו לומדים תורה ביום זה... (ברכות טז.)
אמור של הלכה בלבד

The Aruch Hashulchan⁸ explains this as follows:

When learning Torah, one has joy, and also the discomfort in trying to figure out what the Torah is saying. The main learning of Torah is joy, even if there is a little pain. The discomfort of learning the sad things allowed on Tishah B'Av (see below), outweighs the joy, so one is allowed to learn these topics on Tishah B'Av.

Permitted

One is allowed to read *kinos*, *Iyov*,⁹ and the bad things expressed in *Yirmiyah*.¹⁰ One is permitted to learn *Midrash Eichah*¹¹ and the chapter of *elu migalchim* in *Moed Kattan* which discusses *aveilus*.¹² One may learn the story of the second Beis Hamikdash,¹³ as well as the story of the destruction found in the end of *Yerushalmi* on *Ta'anis*,¹⁴ and the accounts of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash such as that of Josephus.¹⁵

Anything which is said in the normal course of *davening* may be said on Tishah B'Av as well.¹⁶ Included in this is *korbanos* (*Parshas Tamid*),¹⁷ *Eizehu Mekoman*, and *Rabbi Yishmael*. A *ba'al korei*¹⁸ can look over the *leining* before he

8 554:3-4.

9 And its explanation (*Shulchan Aruch* 554:2).

10 *Maseches Ta'anis* 30a; *Shulchan Aruch* 554:1; *Aruch Hashulchan* 5. Bad things that happen to non-Jews one may not study (*Magen Avraham* 3; *Mishnah Berurah* 2).

11 As well as an explanation of *Eichah* (*Shulchan Aruch* 554:2).

12 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:2.

13 *Gittin* (55b-58a; *Sanhedrin* 96a, 104b) (*Mishnah Berurah* 3).

14 *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 124:5.

15 *Mishnah Berurah* 554:3.

16 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:4; *Aruch Hashulchan* 6.

17 *Mishnah Berurah* 7.

18 *Mishnah Berurah* 8.

כל השנה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הנא... (תדה עב)

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leins it on Tishah B'Av.¹⁹ *Krias Shema* and *birchos Krias Shema* are also permitted.²⁰

Stories of righteous people may be read.²¹

One is allowed to study the *kinos* recited on Tishah B'Av.²²

Even when learning permitted topics, if there are *pesukim* of consolation one needs to skip them.²³

Mussar sefarim may be studied on Tishah B'Av in order to arouse the heart to do *teshuvah* and improve oneself.²⁴ Based on this, tens of thousands of people all over the world watch the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation video and other such videos on Tishah B'Av.

Even while learning the permitted topics, it should not be done in depth.²⁵

The custom is to permit learning the topics which are allowed on Tishah B'Av even with a *chavrusa*, or through public lectures, classes etc.²⁶

Other Non-Permitted Learning

Tehillim should not be recited²⁷ unless one is doing so for a sick person and recites Tehillim every day.²⁸

19 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:4. See *Taz* 3, *Sha'ar Hatzion* 11 about being *ma'avir sedra*. Refer to *Aruch Hashulchan* 6 which questions being *ma'avir sedra*.

20 *Magen Avraham* 7; *Be'er Heitiv* 5; *Mishnah Berurah* 6.

21 *Halichos Shlomo, Moadim* 15, footnote 36.

22 *The Three Weeks* (Cohen), page 137.

23 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:1.

24 *Yabia Omer, Y.D.* 2:24:10. See *Mekadesh Yisrael* 286; *Massei Ish* 1, page 90; *Ashrei Ha'ish* 3, pages 484-485, quoting the opinion of Harav Elyashiv *zt"l*.

25 *Mishnah Berurah* 4. See *Orchos Rabbeinu* 2, page 142. See also *Aruch Hashulchan, Y.D.* 384:5.

26 *Mekadesh Yisrael* 289; *Kara Alai Moed* 8, footnote 3. See *Magen Avraham* 2.

27 *Sha'ar Hatzion* 8; *Rivevos Ephraim* 3, page 433; *Shmasa D'Moshe*, page 431; *V'aleihu Lo Yibol* 1, page 198; *Ohr L'tzion* 3:29:1. Refer to *Mekadesh Yisrael* 286. See *Magen Avraham* 6; *Be'er Heitiv* 4. Refer to *Orchos Rabbeinu* 2, page 142.

28 *Shalmei Moed*, page 489. See *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:386:1, 2:155:7.

A *dayan* should not *pasken* a question regarding monetary issues if it can wait until after Tishah B'Av.²⁹

Children

There is a discussion if children can learn Torah on Tishah B'Av.³⁰ Although the children may not feel the joy of learning Torah, it is still forbidden to teach children (even permitted topics), because of the joy of the teacher in teaching Torah.³¹ Others allow an adult to teach the permitted topics.³² Some maintain that a child under twelve who does not derive joy from learning may study any Torah topic.

Children age twelve and above may not learn non-permitted topics by themselves since it brings joy.³³

Thinking

There are some who maintain that one may not think in learning if the topic is not on the permitted list.³⁴ Although thinking is not considered like talking, one feels joy while thinking in learning.³⁵

Writing – Typing

According to some *poskim* one is not allowed to write down Torah on Tishah B'Av from non-permitted topics.³⁶ Writing permitted topics is not an issue.

29 Magen Avraham 5; Mishnah Berurah 5; Aruch Hashulchan 5.

30 Maseches Ta'anis 30a.

31 Mishnah Berurah 2. See *Sha'ar Hatzion* 6. Even according to this opinion teaching topics related to the *Churban* is permitted since it is a story (*Mishnah Berurah* 2).

32 Taz 1; *Dagul Meiravah* 554; *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 124:5; *Mishnah Berurah* 2.

33 *Biur Halachah* 554, "biteilim."

34 *Shulchan Aruch* 554:3.

35 Taz 2; Magen Avraham 5; Mishnah Berurah 5.

36 *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 554:20. Refer to *Kaf Hachaim* 10 which brings many who are lenient. Refer to *Mekadesh Yisrael* 287. See *Aruch Hashulchan* 4. Also see *She'arim Metzuyanim B'halachah* 124:6. See *Aruch Hashulchan*, Y.D. 384:5.

Obligation to Learn or No Obligation

There is a discussion in the *poskim* if one has an obligation to learn the permitted topics on Tishah B'Av, or perhaps there is no obligation to learn even the permitted topics since all other areas of Torah are not allowed.

Some maintain that once one read *Krias Shema* in the morning, there is no obligation to learn the permitted topics.³⁷ However, most other *poskim* disagree with this.³⁸ Obviously, even according to the ones who hold there is no obligation to learn, if one does learn the permitted topics he gets reward like learning Torah.

Erev Tishah B'Av

The opinion of some is that after *chatzos* (midday) on Erev Tishah B'Av one should only learn the topics which are permitted.³⁹

In general, refraining from learning after *chatzos* on Erev Tishah B'Av is only a *chumra*.⁴⁰

Tishah B'Av That Falls on Shabbos

If Tishah B'Av falls out on Shabbos and is pushed off until Sunday, *Pirkei Avos* is not recited.⁴¹ The reason for this restriction is that when one learns he will think about it afterwards on Tishah B'Av itself.⁴²

Others question how it is possible to forbid Torah on Erev Tishah B'Av if we eat during this time. We can eat

37 Refer to *Ritva, Maseches Moed Kattan* 15a, *Halichos Shlomo, Moadim* 15, footnote 34.

38 *Divrei Yatziv, O.C.* 240. Refer to *Even Pinah* 1:47; *Yabia Omer, Y.D.* 8:35.

39 *Rema* 553:2, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 123:2.

40 *Gra* 553; *Mishnah Berurah* 8; *Aruch Hashulchan* 4. It is apparent that if one does not learn what he is used to he will not learn at all (*Aruch Hashulchan* 4). See *Ohr L'tzion* 3:28:5. Refer to *Ashrei Ha'ish* 3, page 477 regarding a father and son learning program on Shabbos which is Erev Tishah B'Av.

41 *Rema* *ibid.* See *Chasam Sofer, O.C.* 553.

42 *Ibid.* See *Miyum Hahalachah* 3:105.



meat on Shabbos when Tishah B'Av is pushed off, so why is learning more stringent?⁴³ Therefore, they permit learning on Shabbos after *chatzos* when Tishah B'Av falls out on Shabbos.⁴⁴

כל השומה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא... (מדה עב.)

43 See *Magen Avraham* 7. Refer to *Divrei Yatziv*, O.C. 240.

44 *Taz* 553:2; *Aruch Hashulchan* 4. See *Magen Avraham* 7. Refer to *Ma'adanei Yom Tov*, page 54.



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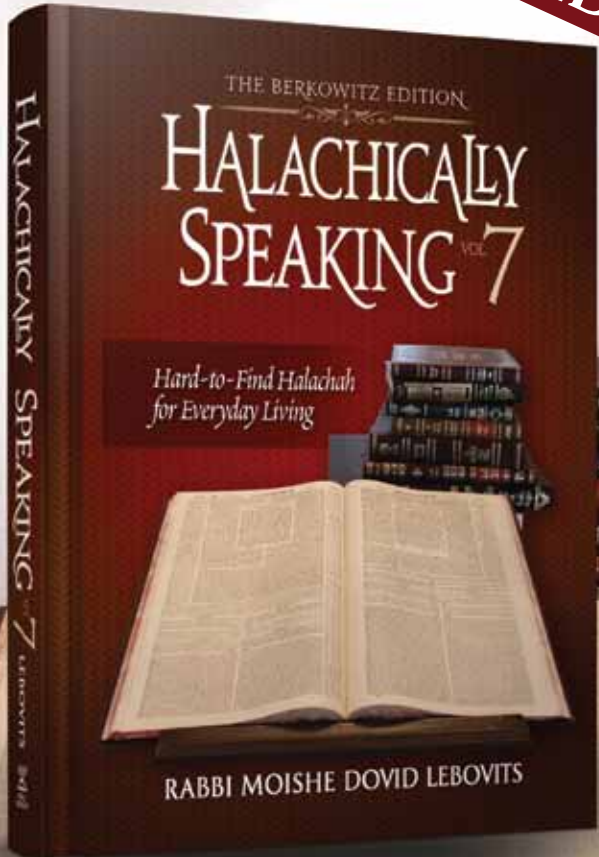
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